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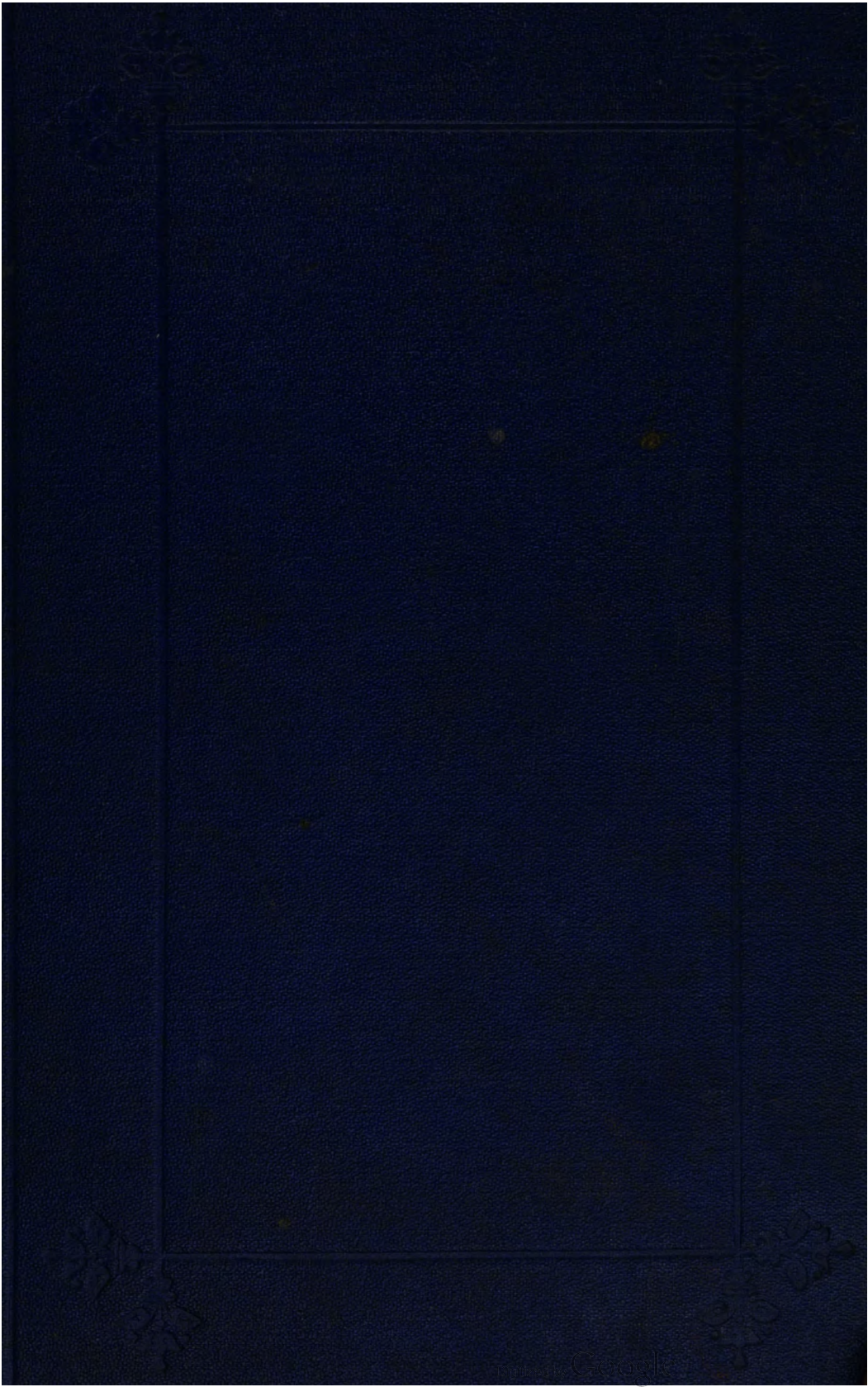
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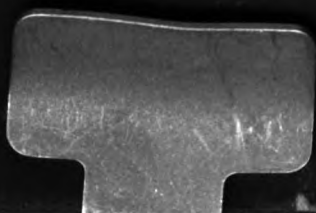
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# M A R Y

THE OBJECT OF VENERATION, CONFIDENCE, AND  
IMITATION TO ALL CHRISTIANS.

BIBLIOTHÈQUE S. J.

*Les Fontaines*

60 - CHANTILLY



LONDON: PRINTED BY  
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AND PARLIAMENT STREET

THE WOMAN BLESSED BY ALL GENERATIONS

OR

M A R Y

THE OBJECT OF VENERATION, CONFIDENCE, AND  
IMITATION TO ALL CHRISTIANS.

BY

THE REV. RAPHAEL MELIA, D.D.

P. S. M.

BIBLIOTHÈQUE S. J.

*Les Fontaines*

60 - CHANTILLY

LONDON:  
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
1868.





TO  
THE MOST HONOURABLE  
THE MARCHIONESS OF LONDONDERRY,

§c. §c.

---

*My Lady,*

*My object in writing the following pages being to lay before both Catholics and Protestants the claims of the Blessed Virgin Mary to the veneration, confidence, and imitation of all Christians, it occurred to me that it would further tend to this result, if I were to dedicate my work to some noble lady who, born and nurtured out of the Church, had, after a careful and prayerful examination of the difficulties felt by her co-religionists on the subject of the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, embraced the Truth, and in becoming a Catholic had also entered the ranks of the devout clients of Mary. But no name has occurred to me as more worthy to occupy this page than your Ladyship's; for as your high birth, worldly position, and moral virtues have ever been held in high esteem by all who approached you; so now the humility, the charity, and*

*other virtues so strikingly displayed by our Blessed Mother, and reflected in your Ladyship's life, call forth the esteem and admiration of your fellow Catholics.*

*In the full confidence that my little work, seeing the light under the patronage of your noble and highly respected name, may, under God's providence, be the means of leading many to follow your Ladyship's example,*

*I have the honour to be*

*Your Ladyship's*

*Most obedient servant,*

**RAPHAEL MELIA.**

ST. PETER'S ITALIAN CHURCH,  
HATTON WALL, HATTON GARDEN:  
*April 1, 1868.*

## INTRODUCTION AND AIM OF THE PRESENT WORK.



ON VISITING a new Catholic church, prior to its being opened for public service, whilst I was looking at the image of the Blessed Virgin in the stained-glass window of the choir, a gentleman approached me and said that he could not bear to see Catholics worshipping the Virgin Mary, that being idolatry condemned by a commandment of God. When he had ceased speaking, I said to him as nearly as I can remember: 'Excuse me, sir; you misapprehend the nature of the worship offered by the Catholic Church to our Blessed Lady. You ought to know that we Catholics make a wide distinction between the worship of God, and that of the Blessed Virgin and of the other saints. To God alone we give divine honour, supreme homage and adoration; to Him alone do we offer sacrifice; in Him alone do we admit such attributes as omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, &c.; so that according to the Catholic doctrine it would be an act of idolatry to ascribe these attributes to any creature, even to the most exalted of them. The worship shown by Catholics to the Blessed Virgin is measured by the high and supernatural excellence conferred upon her by Almighty God, in her election to the dignity of Mother of God. This dignity, far higher than that of any other among creatures, entitles her to be more highly honoured and venerated than any of the angels or saints, but by a degree of worship far inferior to that of God; so much so, that the veneration, homage, or

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worship, as it may be termed, given by Catholics to the Blessed Virgin, however it may raise her above all other created beings, cannot with any discrimination be compared with, or assimilated to, that divine honour, supreme worship and adoration which we offer to the Sovereign Deity. In other words, we ascribe to the Blessed Virgin not any inherent attribute of God, but only created perfections, and consider her as the moon in its fulness of splendour, but radiant with the light of the sun, from which it derives all beauty.' Although my new acquaintance acknowledged this doctrine consistent and reasonable, yet long and deeply rooted prejudices were not to be so easily overcome. 'I have,' added he, 'read and travelled a great deal, and from what I have read and seen I cannot help saying that Catholics really worship the Virgin as God.' 'If you will have the goodness,' I replied, 'to tell me the authors, or the titles of the books in question, I shall be happy to give you the proper answer to them.' 'I do not,' said he, 'remember any book in particular; but I recollect having read some passages of the kind in your prayer-books, and, further, I have seen Catholics bowing their heads in adoration of the Virgin.' In reply, I said: 'With regard to any prayer-book that may seem to attribute to Mary a nature more than human, you should consider that such expressions are to be looked upon only as the effusions of pious souls who had the good intention of thus showing their love towards the Blessed Mother of God. If these expressions be taken in the sense meant by those who wrote or uttered them, they will be found to be perfectly justifiable, though by those who have not been brought up in the Catholic faith (through want of clear ideas and practical knowledge of the subject) they may be deemed derogatory to the attributes of God. However, should any expressions be found in our books of devotion inconsistent with the teaching of theology, they are by no means to be considered as sanctioned, much less suggested or enjoined, by the Catholic Church. In approved

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Catholic books you will find the Blessed Virgin always represented and addressed as our advocate before the throne of God, all powerful by the power of supplication, interceding for us, which idea excludes all attributes of divine power and perfection. As to people bowing their heads to, and even, as you say, adoring the Blessed Virgin, allow me to observe that there may be some instances of infringement of the rule sanctioned by the Catholic Church in the display of external acts of honour and reverence to our Blessed Lady, which by some may be carried so far as to wound the susceptibility of those who are not of the Faith. But, for this, blame not the Catholic Church; refer it rather to those rare yet irremediable disadvantages which are incidental to human society. Besides, on seeing a Catholic adoring, as you say, the Virgin, you should have asked him if by it he meant to worship her like God; as I am quite sure that upon questioning him upon the subject, you would have heard from him without hesitation, nay with a cry of horror, that neither he, nor any other Catholic, intended to pay the Blessed Virgin Mary that honour which is properly due to God.' After this explanation the gentleman said, 'I have no further reply to make; I believe now as you do in reference to the Madonna; and I think,' added he, 'that I may be considered a Catholic.' I observed to him, that besides this there were other tenets in the Catholic religion to be believed before he could call himself a Catholic. I mentioned to him the principal articles of our religion, at the same time adding that to give him a full explanation of the Catholic doctrine would require some time, and a more appropriate place. He then asked me if my home was far from that place, and on my answering in the affirmative, he offered me a seat in his carriage, and drove me home. I there briefly and summarily explained to his satisfaction the various leading tenets of the Catholic faith. All the difficulties he had before experienced seemed to be so completely overcome, that there was no apparent obstacle to



his being at once admitted into the Church. But difficulties of another kind prevented this being done; for being a scion of an English aristocratic family, he could not well take any steps in changing his religion without previously intimating it to them, though he felt certain that it would be quite useless for him to attempt to speak to them on the subject. I then encouraged him to put his trust in God, by whose grace he would succeed in overcoming all difficulties in the way of embracing the truth. As he was leaving town the following day, I gave him some books of instruction on religion and on meditation, at the same time advising him to seek some Catholic priest in his neighbourhood, and to confer with him on the subject. At the moment of our separation I said to him: 'As you have entertained ideas so contemptuous of the Blessed Virgin, when you spoke of her at the new church, you must offer a reparation for it. Take and keep,' said I, 'this little picture of the Blessed Virgin and Divine Infant (which I presented to him), and promise me to place it in your bedroom, and every night, on retiring to rest, to turn your eyes towards it; nay, if you feel so disposed, say a short prayer before it.' At this proposal he seemed startled; but, quickly recovering himself, he said 'Yes,' and taking the picture, he added, 'I promise to do so.' Several months had elapsed without my hearing from him, when one morning he unexpectedly presented himself, and asked me if I remembered him. I answered 'Yes, and I have been long anxiously expecting to hear from you.' 'Well,' he said, 'I have performed what you enjoined me, and by the grace of God and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, I have become a Catholic by the ministry of a priest upon whom I called at a neighbouring Catholic chapel.'

I have thought proper to relate this fact, in order to show that some who are outside the Catholic Church, as the above-mentioned gentleman, speak against the Blessed Vir-

gin because they are not well acquainted with the true doctrine and practice of Catholicity. Educated as they are in Protestantism, they are imbued from their infancy with the most ridiculous and degrading prejudices against the Catholic religion, and besides being prohibited from the perusal of Catholic books, they readily imbibe the poisonous misrepresentations poured forth from Protestant publications, and, destitute of even the barest notion of the Catholic faith, and having neither friends nor relations but Protestants, repeat what they hear with neither the will nor the means of ascertaining whether it be true or false. Did such persons but meet with a well instructed Catholic, of whom they could inquire for some correctly defined notions of the Church's true doctrine and morals, they might, by the grace of God, decide upon returning to the faith to which their forefathers and their country once so happily belonged. This is commonly the case with Protestants, as far as my experience, obtained in frequent intercourse with them, testifies.

It may therefore be possible to succeed in rendering some service to Protestants, as well as to Catholics, by writing the present work, were it only to give them a true idea of the worship due to the Mother of God, and to vindicate her right to our veneration, confidence, and imitation. In doing so, I shall abstain from saying anything that might be considered novel, or foreign to the subject, or that might be peculiar to some particular school, and not suited to England or other Protestant countries. The doctrine laid down in this book is simply that of the *school of Jesus Christ*, suited to all countries, and claiming a right to be received by all who desire to be called true Christians. The aim of this work, then, will be to bring forward only what is taught by the Universal Church, and is common to all Catholic nations. Moreover, it will contain arguments and authorities that will commend themselves to its readers with all the force of logical truth. In this particular it will

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strictly adhere to the line marked out by that eminent Protestant divine, Dr. Waterland, who, in his celebrated work, entitled 'The Use and Value of Ecclesiastical Antiquity,' says: 'Antiquity superadded to Scripture is what we sincerely value, and pay a great regard to' (Catholic Safeguards, vol. iii. p. 409, London, 1851). And again (p. 411): 'One great use of antiquity is to guard the natural construction against unnatural distortions. To do violence to Scripture in order to bring it to speak what we have a mind to, or to what we have perceived, is making Scripture insignificant, and setting up a new rule of faith.' The same is the doctrine taught by Nelson and Gerald, as cited by Dr. Waterland (ibid. p. 467). Nor is this the opinion of only private doctors of the Protestant Church; but it is a canon of the said Church, cited by Bishop Cosin, in his work 'On Transubstantiation' (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 402), in the following words: 'They that are in Holy Orders are bound by a law and canon never to teach anything to the people to be by them believed in matters of religion, but what agrees with the doctrine of the Old and New Testament, and what the Catholic fathers and ancient prelates have gathered and inferred out of it, under pain of excommunication if they transgress, troubling the people with contrary doctrine.' Bishop Bull, speaking of the same canon (as found in the Collection of the Canons, London, 1691, p. 238), says: 'Almost at the commencement of our Reformation, in the year 1571, was that remarkable canon respecting preachers sanctioned by the consent of a full provincial synod, and, further, by the royal authority of Elizabeth' (Vincent of Lirins against Heresy, Oxford, 1841, p. 193). It is in pursuance of these principles that there will be employed in the present work both Scripture and the tradition of the early fathers of the Church. So, in praising the Blessed Virgin, it will strictly observe the Protestant principle of Bishop Bull, 'Of the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin' (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii.

p. 273), who says, 'We will not give her lavish and excessive attributes, beyond what the Holy Scriptures allow her, and the holy men of the primitive Church afforded her.' Accordingly we shall bring forward the testimony of the fathers of the first five centuries only; and we shall use them in a double capacity—as witnesses of the existing doctrine both traditional and biblical; of true tradition, and the interpretation of Holy Writ, informing us what doctrines were in those times professed in the Church, and what explanations of the Scripture were then unanimously received. So when from their combined testimony it appears that any doctrine was generally maintained as of faith in the early ages of the Church, it is held as having come down from the apostles; and so likewise, when the fathers generally offer the same interpretation of a text of Scripture in support of any doctrine, it may be fairly inferred that such was the meaning of that text as originally understood and delivered.

To the tradition of the early fathers may be added another testimony of equal, and, in some instances, of more remote antiquity, which is exhibited in ancient remains, such as painting, sculpture, mosaics, cameos, glass, and other ancient memorials found, for the most part, in the Roman catacombs. This, the author feels assured, will afford pleasure to such of his Protestant brethren as take delight in the study of antiquity. Moreover, in order to treat the subject completely, it has been found necessary occasionally to compare the texts of Holy Writ in the Vulgate, or Catholic authorised translation, and the corresponding text in the other translations; so that the reader may see at once how far the quotations from the Vulgate translation are conformable to those of the Greek Septuagint, the Syriac, the Chaldaic, the Arabic, the Samaritan, and the various ancient English translations. Nay more; in order to show himself, as far as possible, perfectly disposed to admit the authority of Protestant divines and writers, the author will make use

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of their testimony, as far as he thinks them right, as evidences of Catholic doctrine; at the same time trusting that Protestant readers will not object to what their own doctors and writers admit and profess. In fine, it is the aim of the present work to take into examination all the principal objections against the worship of the Blessed Virgin, and give to each its proper reply, borrowed, as often as possible, from the mouth of the same Protestant authorities.

The reader of this work will not find the Virgin Mary held up as one to be worshipped like a deity; neither will he find her considered as the source of grace, nor as having by her merits rescued fallen man from eternal damnation; nor as knowing our wants or hearing our prayers by her own exclusive power; nor will he learn that the sacrifice of the altar should be offered to her, or that any of God's attributes should be ascribed to her. No such assumptions will be found in the work. The reader will see that the Blessed Virgin Mary, although endowed with the highest heavenly gifts and raised to the most exalted dignity that a creature can attain, is yet a pure creature of Almighty God; and as such is attributed to her, with the Catholic Church, only what a superlatively privileged creature could effectually receive from that omnipotent and loving God to render her worthy to be the Mother of His only-begotten Son. Hence, though the author of course is opposed to the doctrine of Luther, nevertheless he will say with him, 'Mary does not wish to be an idol. We should invoke her, in order that God, through her intercession, may grant our requests.' This is precisely what the Catholic Church teaches, and what Luther himself was taught by his Catholic preceptors from his infancy. Indeed, the Blessed Virgin Mary does not claim to be adored as an idol, a goddess or a deity: she was too humble and pious to give grounds for entertaining herself with any such thoughts. On the contrary, she wished but to be ever regarded as God's



creature, nay, as the handmaid of the Lord. According to this unchanged principle, the Catholic Church, as soon as she heard that the Collyridians had made an idol of the Blessed Virgin, condemned them as heretics. Upon this subject St. Epiphanius says (Hæres. lix.): ‘Though Mary was a chosen vessel and endued with eminent sanctity, she is nevertheless a woman, and participates in that nature which is common to us all, but is yet deserving of the highest honours shown to the saints of God. She stands before them all by reason of the heavenly mystery accomplished in her. We do not adore the saints, we simply honour them: let Mary, then, be honoured, and let the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be adored.’ That, indeed, no one should adore Mary, has been always the belief and teaching of the Universal Church, as appears from the public prayers sanctioned by her, in which Mary is only invoked as our intercessor before the throne of her Divine Son, while Jesus Christ alone is acknowledged and addressed as our Redeemer, and our Mediator with the eternal Father.

These being the views of the present work, it will consist of two parts, the first of which will be found to be theoretical, the second practical. In the First Part it will be shown that the Most Holy Trinity made Mary an object of veneration and confidence, coevally with the faith in a future Redeemer, among all generations previous to the coming of the Messiah; and that, in the new dispensation, such veneration and confidence was diffused throughout the primitive Church together with Christianity. The First Part is calculated to remove from the minds of those who are without the pale of the Catholic Church prejudices entertained against devotion to Mary, and to place in a true light Mary’s high dignity and merit, as well as the claims she has to be honoured and confided in by all Christians. In the Second Part is shown the beauty of the virtues with which our Blessed Lady was adorned, and how easily they may be copied and imitated by

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us in our lives and conduct. In consideration that the work is addressed also to the instruction of those out of the true Church, the author, while speaking of the virtues of Mary, especially of her faith, has thought it necessary to explain some controverted points of doctrine, in order to show better in what must consist the imitation of the virtues of the Blessed Virgin.

May it please Almighty God, in His mercy, to enlighten the mind of the reader, that he may perceive the truth and be moved to embrace it. It is confidently hoped that some minds still blind and some hearts still cold may, upon an unprejudiced perusal of this work, begin to conceive a true and pure devotion to the Blessed Mother of God, and say from their own convictions: ‘How worthy is she of our veneration and confidence; how good and truly maternal is her heart; how sweet her love; and how easy it is to imitate her!’

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*The Engravings in this Work are by the Graphotyping Company,  
Limited.*

### *Errata*

Page 7, line 10, *for those read that*

- „ 25, „ 28, „ St. Jerome (adv. Jan.) *read* St. Epiphanius (Hær. 78)
- „ 37, „ 17, „ evidence *read* evidences
- „ 45, „ 24, „ Canto *read* Contra
- „ 56, „ 21, „ Dr. Hicks *read* Dr. Hickes
- „ 81, „ 9, „ imperfectly *read* implicitly
- „ 90, „ 7, „ Loviani *read* Lovanii
- „ „ „ 26, „ from *read* by
- „ „ „ 27, „ nor she was *read* nor was sho
- „ 112, „ 6, „ Pretonilla *read* Petronilla
- „ 114, „ 13, „ Alfieri *read* Altieri
- „ 119, „ 5, „ women *read* woman
- „ 124, „ 10, „ Sermo *read* Serm.
- „ 197, „ 2, „ Cosmadin *read* Cosmedin
- „ 213, „ 6, „ Mazzoni *read* Mozzoni
- „ 227, „ 5, „ to *read* at
- „ 229, „ 6, „ miracles *read* miracle
- „ 328, „ 26, „ deficiency *read* deficiency
- „ 357, „ 30, „ became *read* and having become

Nihil obstat.

PIUS MELIA,

*S. T. D.*

---

Imprimatur.

✠ HENRICUS EDUARDUS,

*Archiep. Westmonasterien.*

THE FIRST AND THEORETICAL PART.

---

MARY MADE BY THE HOLY TRINITY AN  
OBJECT OF VENERATION AND CONFIDENCE  
TO ALL GENERATIONS.





## CHAPTER I.

ON THE FALL OF MAN, AND THE ELECTION OF MARY BY  
THE HOLY TRINITY TO BE THE MOTHER OF THE DIVINE  
REDEEMER.

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### SECTION I.

#### CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

##### 1. *From Holy Scripture.*

GOD, who is by nature bountiful, had created heaven and earth, the sun and the moon, the stars and the planets, and even the animals, in the first instance, for His own glory, viz. the manifestation of His bounty; and, secondly, for the benefit of man, who is ever the object of His tender care and solicitude. Man is appointed by Him, as we read in Holy Writ, the master of the earth:—‘Let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the beasts, and over the whole earth, and over every creeping creature that moveth on the face of the earth’ (Gen. i. 26). God made his body of dust, in order that man, considering his frail nature, should be humble, and subject to his Creator. But of what a different nature is man’s soul? It is formed of a simple and spiritual substance, indivisible, incapable of dissolution, not subject to corruption; in a word, the soul of man is created spiritual, incorruptible, and immortal. Therefore as God, in creating other things, has up to this point spoken and acted in one way, so now that He is to create the soul of man, to show its greatness, a new form of language is used by God. He no longer commands any of the preceding productions to give existence to others, as He did with regard to the plants, saying, ‘Let the earth bring

forth the green herbs' (Gen. i. 2); or, as in creating the beasts, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures,' &c. (ibid. 24). In creating man's soul the manner of acting and speaking is entirely changed; it is no longer the singular number, in which all other things were created, but the plural, that is here employed. The three persons of the Blessed Trinity assume a common language, and say: 'Let us make man' (ibid. 26). But to what image and likeness is man to be created? Is it to that of the corporeal matter, or to that of the plants and trees, or brute creation? No; the soul of man being the principal object of the love of the Holy Trinity, is to be created after the image and likeness of the same Trinity. Hence the three Divine Persons say, 'Let us make man to *our* image and likeness' (ibid. 26). Oh, what a dignity! what an honour! what a nobleness of design is here displayed! Man's soul created after the very image and likeness of the most august Trinity! Thus the breath of life was infused into the body of Adam, as is related in the same book (chap. ii. 7): 'And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul.' In the same book it is also said (chap. i. 27):—'And God created man to His own image, and to the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.' Adam's body till that moment was inert, senseless, lifeless, and unconscious as the stone; but, as soon as the breath of life, the simple and spiritual soul is infused into it by God, man was made, and Adam became a living being. Therefore the human soul is a thinking, spiritual, indivisible, simple substance, having no composition, no extension, no divisibility, and therefore is incorruptible, imperishable, and immortal, quite independent of the body, and created for an everlasting life. Hence, whilst the body, on account of its being composed of parts, and subject to corruption, shall by death return to the earth, the soul shall survive it. At the moment of their separation the judgment of God will follow. As man's soul was created free in all its operations, so will it receive its reward, or punishment, according to the right or wrong use man made of his liberty during his temporal life; as the Apostle Paul,

to the Hebrews (chap. x. 27), declares, 'It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment.' It was in consideration of such a wonderful creation of man that David, turning to his Creator, full of gratitude, exclaims with astonishment (Psalm viii.), 'What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the Son of Man that Thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little less than the angels: Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast subjected all things under his feet.' It is to be observed that in the commentary on the above words, 'made him a little less than the angels,' the version of the seventy interpreters, in conformity with the original Hebrew, says that He made him a little less *than God*, as *Elohim*, which generally means God, is used in that place; and after this manner it has been also interpreted by St. Jerome, in his commentary on the same psalm. Hence St. Paul calls men the offspring of God, as related in the Acts of the Apostles (xvii. 29), when speaking in the Areopagus of Athens he said, 'Being, therefore, the offspring of God,' &c. And the same Apostle (1 Corinthians xi. 7) calls man 'the image and glory of God.' In the words 'Let us make man to our image and likeness' (Gen. i. 26), a distinction is drawn between image and likeness. The distinction consists in this, that the image is in the nature, while the likeness is in the perfection of the same nature. The image relates to the essential qualities of the spirit; the likeness to a greater or less degree of excellence in the same qualities of the spirit. For instance, a picture which represents a person, no matter whether well or ill executed, is called an image of such a person; but when the picture is a really perfect representation of the original, and is well executed in all its parts, like the prototype, it is then called a true likeness of the person. Hence in proportion as an image more or less perfectly expresses the features of the original, it is said to be more or less a likeness. Man, therefore, in his intrinsic and spiritual being—that is, in his soul—is an image of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the unity of one nature; an image of a nature quite different from the other created things, as stones, plants, beasts; an image not merely figu-

rative as that of a painting which represents the prototype without sharing in the identity of the person it represents, but a living image of created nature participating (with such limitation as human beings require) in the properties of the Divine nature, so as to represent God's likeness and attributes. Hence man, whether just or sinful, is always the image of God ; but with regard to the likeness of God, as has been already remarked, he may be more or less perfectly like to God ; that is, in proportion as he expresses more or less in himself the perfections of God. Therefore when mortal sin enters the soul of man it destroys not the image, but only the likeness of God.

Now, Adam and Eve were created to the image and likeness of God, as we learn by the Holy Scripture (Gen. v. 1, 2). 'On the day that God created man, He made him to the likeness of God ; He created them male and female, and blessed them.' Moreover, God adorned them with holiness and original justice, having all their motions and appetites under the control of their reason. Besides, He endowed them with the free power of choosing between good and evil, in order to enable them to serve their Creator with merit, for a certain time, as sojourners ; and at the close of their trial on earth, being found faithful to God, they were to be transferred to the Heavenly Paradise, to the beatific vision, to see God face to face, and be partakers of His eternal happiness. They were situated in a place of abundance, beautiful and happy, with full power over all created things. Their uninterrupted communication with their Creator, like the familiarity of a child with its father, made them quite happy, and blessed in the earthly paradise. Thus the principal end of creation was fulfilled, and God's bounty gloriously manifested. Such was the happy and glorious creation of our progenitors, in which we also should have had a share. But they, alas ! unfortunately giving consent to the temptation of the devil, and making an ill use of their liberty, in opposition to the commands of their Creator, lost their original justice with all infused graces, except faith and hope, as well as the likeness of God and His friendship. The covenant was broken, the Eternal Being could no longer communicate as formerly with His creature, reduced by his

own malice to the state of death, and deprived of the right to eternal glory. Besides, man became hateful to God, an object of wrath, and subject to ignorance, to darkness of intellect, to the perversion of his own will, to war with his passions; in a word, he was now subject to sickness, misery, and death. Behold the consequences of sin! And this catastrophe of evils was not to be circumscribed or confined to our forefathers, but extended to their descendants, who had likewise to share in the same punishment, losses, and miseries; the fault of the children being comprised in those of their progenitors. It is, indeed, an article of faith, that through the sin of Adam death came into the world, as we read in the Book of Wisdom, 'God made not death, neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living' (Wisdom ii. 13). From the same book (ii. 23, 24) we also learn, that it was through the envy of the devil that death came, 'God created man incorruptible and to His own image and likeness. He created him, but, by the envy of the devil, death came into the world.'

Malice which cannot be described, having been displayed in the sin of our first parents, on account of the offence given to the infinite Majesty of God, who is infinitely worthy of obedience and love, an atonement of infinite merit was necessary to appease divine justice. Any satisfaction whatever on the part of man would ever be limited, and therefore insufficient to expiate the horrible malice of sin. It was therefore required, in the views of the all-merciful Providence, that God should find the means of an atonement which would be sufficient to repair the losses of man, and satisfy the justice of God. Accordingly the Eternal Word offered Himself to His Eternal Father, as a ransom for fallen man, and, by assuming humanity, and subjecting Himself to humiliations and torments, to accomplish the redemption of mankind. But the Son of God being impassible and immortal by nature, was incapable of suffering and thereby of giving satisfaction. It was then necessary that the same Divine Word, remaining immutable in His Divine Nature, should take to Himself our human nature, that is, should take a body and soul like ours, and in His human nature

should suffer and die, whilst by His Divine nature He would give infinite merit to the sacrifice, and thus the redemption of fallen man was to be abundantly accomplished.

Now in order that the Son of God might be able to accomplish the great mystery of His Incarnation, a woman had to be chosen to become His mother. As Jesus Christ was to be the second Adam, so this woman was to be the second Eve. While the new Adam through his infinite merits was to give satisfaction to Divine justice, for the fault of the first Adam and his descendants, the new Eve was to contribute to the rescue of the human race, by being adorned with the splendour of such virtues as were wanting in Eve. If the first Eve brought malediction on earth, the new Eve was to bring forth benediction. If the former, as the carnal mother, was the ruin of mankind, the latter, as the spiritual mother, was to be the instrument of its reparation. Then how great, noble, and full of every perfection, must be that creature, who was to become the mother of God! How can human intellect conceive the sublimity of the dignity, and extent of grace which was to be conferred on such a chosen creature! Human thought cannot reach the grandeur of the idea, that a woman should be so exalted as to be raised to the dignity of mother of her Creator, and to share in the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and contribute to the revival of the lost glory of man! Man's intellect finds itself lost in attempting to comprehend its extent, and therefore humbling itself before such an exalted dignity, has only to exhibit in respectful silence the most profound veneration towards her!

But who shall be this so highly exalted creature? She is a beautiful maiden living in Nazareth, poor, despised indeed, though tracing her origin from the Royal House of David, but at the same time a virgin most humble, pious, and eminently great in all virtues. In the history of Esther, who was a type of the Blessed Virgin, is given an idea of the exaltation of Mary, her dignity and power in being chosen Mother of God. Queen Vashti having been found guilty of an act of disobedience to the command of Ahasuerus, king of Persia, was deprived of her royal dignity and cast aside. After this,

messengers were despatched throughout the kingdom to choose from among the most beautiful and virtuous maidens, one who was to become the queen and chosen wife of the king. Among those selected for that purpose, one was a Jewess named Esther, who was not only endowed with the most rare and extraordinary beauty, but was also enriched with singular grace and virtue, and had been educated with the greatest care by her uncle Mordecai. As soon as she was presented at court, and the king saw her extraordinary beauty, her grace, her modesty, her sweet meek countenance, he did not hesitate to prefer her to the rest, and the marriage feast immediately followed. Now Eve, disobedient to God, was figured by Queen Vashti, who was disgraced because of her disobedience to Ahasuerus ; but Mary, all obedient to the call of the Holy Trinity, was figured by Esther obedient to the voice of the sovereign of Persia. Beauty and other natural and moral endowments and virtues, caused Esther to be preferred to all, and yet these were but a shadow of the innumerable, natural, moral, and supernatural virtues which rendered Mary so pleasing to the Almighty. The search for the best among the Persian maidens to become the Queen, and the finding of Esther endowed with all the required qualities, indicates the order of Providence in choosing Mary amongst all the virgin daughters of the world, as the most fit to become the Queen Mother of the Son of God the Saviour of the world.

Mary, though of royal descent and noble by blood and education, yet like Esther was poor and humble in the sight of the world. She was a hidden, saintly creature, known to none but God, and yet this was sufficient for her elevation to the highest dignity, for God looks only at the qualification of the spirit and the inward merit of the person. As Esther, by being endowed with extraordinary noble qualifications, became fit to be freely elected by Ahasuerus to the dignity of Queen, so Mary possessing all the virtues requisite to become the worthy Mother of God, was gratuitously elected by the Holy Trinity, the Mother of the Eternal Word for the salvation of mankind. The elevation of Esther to the throne of Persia was the means chosen by Providence



for the deliverance of the Jewish people from the deadly decree of Haman, the enemy of the people of God; in the same way Mary was selected by the Holy Trinity to be the instrument in the hands of God for the rescue of fallen man from the dominion of the devil and for the chastisement of that powerful enemy of mankind, as will be shown in the following chapter. Finally, if the elevation of Esther to the high position of queen of a great realm was the highest honour that could be conferred upon a creature, entitling her to admiration and reverence from all, how far greater must be not only the admiration, but the veneration and respect due to Mary, elevated to the unparalleled dignity of the mother of the Word of God?

*2. From the early Fathers of the Church, Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

We have already observed in the introduction to this work that, according to both Catholic and Protestant principles, not only the Scriptures, but also the testimonies of the early fathers ought to suffice for determining points of doctrine. Hence in support of our present thesis of the appointment of Mary by the Holy Trinity to be the free and active element of the coming of the Divine Redeemer for the rescue of sinful man, there will be exhibited here the testimonies of the fathers of both the Latin and Greek Churches of the first five centuries of Christianity.

St. Justin (*Dial. cum Tryph.* 100) says: 'We know that He, before all creatures, proceeded from the Father by His power and will . . . and by means of the Virgin became man, that by what way the disobedience arising from the serpent had its beginning, by that way also it might have an undoing.'

Tertullian (*Lib. de Carn. Christ. cap. xvii. Oper. tom. ii. p. 780, edit. Migne*) says: 'The earth was still virgin, not ploughed, nor sown, when man was taken from it by God, and became a living soul. If the first Adam was so taken from the earth, deservedly the following, or the new Adam as he is called by the Apostle, has been taken from the same

earth, that is, from the virginal flesh in the spirit vivified. . . . God recovered His image and likeness which the devil had seized by a rival operation, for into Eve, as yet a virgin, had crept the word which was the framer of death. Equally into a virgin was to be introduced the Word of God, which was the builder-up of life; that what by that sex had gone into perdition, by the same sex might be brought back to salvation.'

St. Ephrem (Opusc. Syr. ii. p. 318) says: 'Through Eve, the beautiful and desirable glory of man was extinguished: but it has revived through Mary.' And the same holy father (iii. p. 607) adds: 'In the beginning, on account of the sin of our forefathers, death came unto all men; but now, through Mary, we are translated from death to life.'

St. Peter Chrysologus (Serm. 140) says: that Mary was blessed among the women, 'because, in those upon whom punishment came in the malediction of Eve, in them the blessed Mary rejoices, is honoured and admired: and she now is truly made by grace mother of the living, who was by nature mother of the dead. . . . He is absolutely ignorant of the greatness of God who does not wonder at her mind, who does not admire her soul. Indeed Heaven fears, the angels tremble, the creature does not bear, and nature sufficeth not; and yet one maid receives, keeps, and entertains God in her breast.' And the same holy father (Serm. 143) adds: 'Mary bore Him who bears the world: she has generated her own genitor, and has nourished the nourisher of all the living.'

### 3. *From Christian Archæology.*

In confirmation of the truth of what we maintain, besides the tradition of the early fathers, another is to be acknowledged of equal, and even prior antiquity, viz. the tradition of Christian Archæology, in reference to pictures, sculpture, mosaic, cameos, glasses, and other ancient memorials, found principally in the catacombs. The catacombs are ancient subterranean repositories of the bodies of the earliest Christians, existing in several parts of Europe, and especially

in Rome. The Roman catacombs extend beneath the Campagna of Rome, and consist of several more or less regular stories. The greater part of these sepulchral caves are the work of Roman pagans made in excavating the earth in order to obtain sand for building purposes, and these are regularly cut off from all sides, but no small portion of these subterranean passages, particularly the lower floors, is irregularly arranged, and this was the work of the Christians themselves. On both sides of these subterranean ways there were about four or five tiers of graves, on the outside of which was generally made an inscription, either in stone or plaster, with the name of the departed Christian. When the body of a martyr was buried, it was usual to affix an inscription denoting him to be a martyr; or, for an indication of the same, a little phial of his blood, a lamp, or some instrument employed in his martyrdom was deposited. In this underground labyrinth are to be found small chapels, and also basilicas, with accommodation for the offering of the holy sacrifice, preaching, giving instruction, hearing confessions, and so on. On descending into these hypogees one feels struck with a sentiment of awe, mingled with veneration, to find himself in the very place which was sanctified by millions of holy souls, and thousands of glorious martyrs of the catholic faith. As the catacomb was a place both for worship and the burial of Roman Christians, during the time of the persecutions of the pagan emperors previous to Constantine, that is for a period of about four centuries, as attested by historians, and particularly by Chevalier de Rossi in his work, '*Images de la Vierge*,' Rome, 1863, so the monuments found in the catacombs are of an early antiquity, and demonstrate the faith and practice of the primitive church. Therefore we feel happy in being able to prove, by means of the aforesaid memorials, whether in stone, picture, mosaic, or glass, that the worship we at present pay to our Blessed Lady is the same paid to her by those glorious champions of our holy religion who lived in the catacombs, and who were the inheritors of the spirit of the Apostles themselves. Next to the monuments found in the catacombs we will bring forward pictures, mosaics, and sculptures of the

first churches built by the Christians before and sometime after the time of Constantine, as in such monuments the same spirit of the primitive Christians is displayed. We also exhibit pictures found in the so-called Diptychons, or Triptychons, consisting of a double or triple little tablet pictured on each side, which were used by the first Christians, particularly at the time of the persecutions, as they were easily carried from one place to another for the celebration of Mass. In the present chapter, as well as in the following, we shall produce the aforesaid memorials in testimony of the truths which we shall proceed to demonstrate.

Now, in showing the accomplishment of the appointment of Mary to be the Mother of God, we will exhibit a painting which adorns the vault of a niche in the cemetery of Priscilla in Rome, and of which Chevalier De Rossi, in the work before mentioned, speaks as follows:—‘This has been copied by Signor Mariani, who is very clever in the difficult art of copying the ancient frescoes; nevertheless, I must confess that the original is better than the copy, and that the design is more correct, especially with regard to the traits of the Virgin. It is clear that this image represents Mary with the Divine Infant, as may be judged by anyone who possesses only a moderate knowledge of the Catacombs. But to make this still more evident, the painter has put a sign in it, that is, a star upon the picture which is usually found in the paintings of the Virgin, where is added the adoration of the Magi, or of the shepherds at Bethlehem. The Virgin wears a little veil upon her head, her dress is a tunic with a short sleeve and a mantle upon her shoulders. Towards the left of the spectator is seen a man, rather young, with a slight beard, and dressed only with a cloak. He with his right-hand finger indicates the Virgin as well as the star, and a scroll of paper or parchment is in his left hand. As the prophet Isaiah had announced the Divine Maternity of our Blessed Lady, besides foretelling on several occasions the star destined to enlighten the world and dissipate the darkness of Paganism, it seems probable that the figure representing such a man is the said prophet. In a pictured glass of ancient Christianity, illustrated by Father Garucci, Isaiah is repre-

sented under the same aspect of a young man.' And the same Chevalier De Rossi (p. 15) says:—'It is well known by all that the frescoes of the cemetery of St. Priscilla are eminently classical, and belong to the best period of art.' And (p. 20) he concludes: 'Consequently the attentive examination of the proofs derived from monumental history, will enable us to discover that this image of the Blessed Virgin holding her Divine Infant, is a work executed in the ages of the Apostles or a little after. At least I may declare that it is evident that such an image belongs to the times between the Flavians and the first Antoninus—that is, from the second half of the first century to the first part of the second.' This is exhibited in this work by the following plate (fig. 1).

FIG. 1.



We quite agree with Chevalier De Rossi's statement with regard to the personage alluded to in the above fresco, and in confirmation of it we exhibit (fig. 2) a plate taken from a sarcophagus found in the cemetery of St. Agnes referred to in the work '*Roma sotterranea*' (tom. iii. tav. 138), and by Arrighi (tom. ii. lib. iv. cap. xxv.), showing the adoration of the Magi, and the same prophet indicating with his hand the scroll of the prophecies kept by him, while he introduces the Magi to the Divine Redeemer. Two more instances of the same may be found by the reader at Chapter IV. fig. 13, and Chapter XIII. fig. 50, of this work.

FIG. 2.

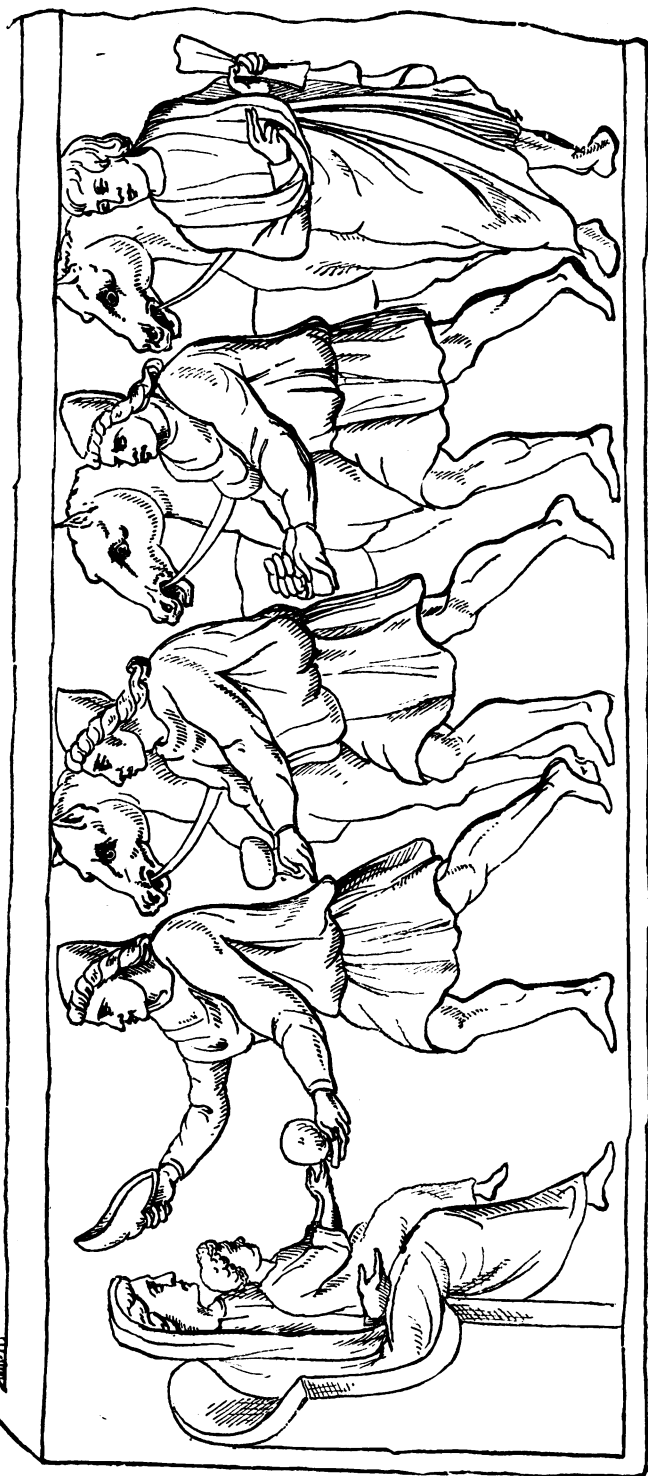


FIG. 3.

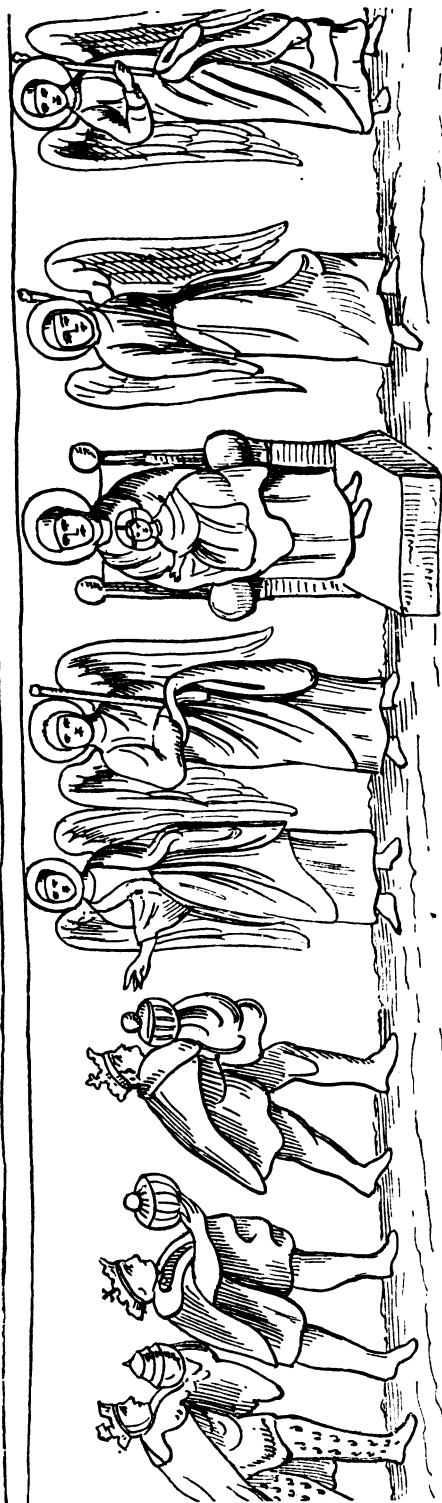


FIG. 4.





Fig. 8.



The same Chevalier de Rossi (p. 21) observes, that the composition where the Virgin is found with the Magi proves that the latter are accessory figures, but that of Mary is the principal, exactly as it is to be seen in the mosaics of the absides and other paintings posterior to the Council of Ephesus, where the personages placed at the sides are but secondary, in order to show better the honour and worship due to the Blessed Virgin. As an evidence of this statement we exhibit, in fig. 3, a mosaic taken from the church of St. Appolinare of Ravenna, of the sixth century, where the Blessed Virgin is in the midst of angels.

By fig. 4 is represented a fresco of the Blessed Virgin holding her Divine Son in her arms, found in the cemetery of Domitilla, Via Ardeatina, and illustrated by the same Chevalier de Rossi, who says: 'Mary is in the middle of the four Magi, who are in the act of going towards her, and bringing their offerings for the Divine Redeemer. Although, according to the ancient tradition, the number of the Magi was only three, in this fresco there are four. The reason of this rare example may be this, namely, that the artist, having placed the Blessed Virgin in the middle and not at the end of the composition as was the custom, he found that placing only three Magi, the Virgin and the Divine Infant did not form the centre-piece, and therefore to observe symmetry it was advisable to increase the number of the Magi by adding another. According to Chevalier de Rossi, the date of the said fresco goes as far back as the third century, and belongs to the first part of the said century.

In the fresco (fig. 5) Mary is represented holding her infant Jesus, while two Magi present their offerings. As in the preceding plate an additional Magi was introduced to keep symmetry, so in the present, for the same reason, there is omitted one, which is a positive proof of their being only accessories to, and attendants on, the Blessed Mother of God. This fresco was found in the cemetery of St. Pietro and Marcellino of Rome, Via Labicana, and has been illustrated by Chevalier de Rossi in the alleged work (p. 13). According to the same learned antiquarian, this painting belongs to the third century.

## SECTION II.

## PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

UNDER the title of Protestant Evidence, we bring forward the testimony of any Christian who is not a Catholic. With regard to the present chapter, of the appointment of Mary to be Mother of the future Redeemer, in consequence of the fall of Adam, we quote the following Protestant evidence.

Martin Luther (Comment. super Magnificat) says: ' Since Mary has been made mother of God, gifts precious and innumerable are given to her that are superior to the understanding. All the honour and blessing comes from this, that among all mankind her person alone is superior to the rest, as she can have no equal, having a Son in common with the Heavenly Father.'

Calvin (Lib. de Harm. Evang.) says: ' We cannot celebrate to-day the benediction brought to us by Christ without commemorating also how honourably Mary was adorned by God, who wished that she should be mother of His only begotten Son.'

Bishop Bull, ' On the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin ' (Catholic Safeguards: London, 1851, vol. ii. p. 269), says: ' We think and speak most respectfully of her, and do not ordinarily mention her name without a preface or epithet of honour, as the Holy Blessed Virgin, and the like. We do, by the appointment of our church, sing or rehearse, in our daily service, her excellent Magnificat, and thereby we testify our assent and complacence on those singular favours that God is therein said to have bestowed on her; and together with her we finally return the praise and glory of all to God alone. We celebrate two annual festivals in her memorial, the Feasts of the Annunciation and Purification; and if we could think of any other honour that we could do her, without dishonouring God the Father and the Eternal Son, we would most willingly yield it to her.'

Dr. Hicks, ' On the due Praise and Honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary ' (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 289), says: ' To be chosen for the mother of God was the greatest honour and favour that ever God conferred upon any human

creature. None of the special honours and favours that He did to any of the saints before or since are equivalent to the honour of being the mother of God. He who said, 'those that honour me I will honour,' would not have done so great an honour to any daughter of Abraham, but to one who best deserved it; to one of the holiest among the daughters of Israel, to the most heavenly minded virgin of the tribe of Judah and the royal house of David, who had no superior for holiness upon earth.'

Mrs. Jameson in her work, 'Legends of the Madonna as represented in the Fine Arts' (London, 1864, p. 69), says: 'I cannot understand why there should exist among Protestants so strong a disposition to discredit every representation of Mary the mother of our Lord, to which a high antiquity had been assigned by the Roman Catholics. We know that, as early as the second century, not only symbolical figures of our Lord, but figures of certain personages of holy life, as St. Peter and St. Paul, Agnes the Roman, and Euphemia the Greek, martyrs, did certainly exist; why, therefore, should there not have existed effigies of the mother of Christ, of her so highly blessed, the subject of so many prophecies, and naturally the object of a tender and a just veneration among the early Christians? It seems to me that nothing could be more likely than that such representations ought to have a deep interest for all Christians, no matter of what denomination, for all in truth that believe the Saviour of the world had a good mother, His only earthly parent who brought Him forth, nurtured, and loved Him.' The same authoress (p. 70), speaking of Chevalier de Rossi, whose authority we have above quoted as evidence of the antiquity of the worship of the Blessed Virgin and her Divine Child, says: 'His celebrity as an antiquarian is not merely Italian but European, and his impartiality can hardly be doubted.' What better evidence can there be than this of Chevalier de Rossi's *undoubted impartiality* in reference to the monuments we have copied from his work in this chapter? The confession, indeed, of Protestant doctors, or writers, upon the subject in question is calculated to impart new evidence to the Catholic doctrine in reference to the early worship of the Blessed Mother of God.

## CHAPTER II.

MARY APPOINTED BY THE HOLY TRINITY TO BE THE MOTHER OF HIM WHO WAS TO CRUSH THE SERPENT'S HEAD, IS ENTITLED TO THE VENERATION AND CONFIDENCE OF ALL GENERATIONS.

## SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From Holy Scripture.*

TOGETHER with the sin of our progenitors, the mercy of God is discovered. Lucifer had seduced the first Eve, had induced our forefathers to rebel against their benevolent Creator, and had introduced sin into the world. On the accomplishment of this iniquitous triumph, he exulted in the glory of having brought the human race under the pressure of his foot; and had proudly exclaimed a second time, 'I shall be like the Most High.' However, as in punishment of his pride he had been already expelled from paradise, and condemned to everlasting fire, so he was now doomed to a second punishment,—that of hearing the humiliating sentence, that a woman should come into the world to bring forth Him who should crush his head by utterly destroying his empire, and by repairing the sin caused by his seduction. If it be true, the sentence of those doctors who maintain that he through pride had refused to adore the human nature which was to be assumed by the Eternal Word according to the revelation made to him and his fellow spirits, and hated, of course, the woman who was to bring Him forth, what shame now he has to suffer, of hearing that the same woman is to come into the world, and, through her Divine Son, to crush his cursed

head ! The Blessed Trinity, therefore, turning to the serpent, said : ' I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel ' (Gen. iii. 14). Or, according to the Hebrew text, ' I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall crush thy head, and thou shalt crush its heel.' The obvious meaning of the Hebrew text and the Vulgate version is the same, as in both the seed of the woman is opposed to the seed of the devil, and on account of that opposition the head of the serpent had to be crushed.

That the woman spoken of in the above text could not be Eve, appears from what God said to her after the fall, ' I will multiply thy sorrows, and by thy conceptions in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children ' (Gen. iii. 16). From which it is clear that, so far from Eve having any part in a future victory over the devil, she was, on the contrary, his victim and a partaker of his humiliations and punishment. Indeed an association and friendship in the work of sin, and a conformity in the sentiment of pride and rebellion against God, had existed between Eve and the serpent, for which she, like him, was punished by God. How then could she be the same woman of the prophecy, who should never be vanquished by the devil ; but, on the contrary, should ever be his conqueror ? Had God, in the foregoing sentence (ver. 4), spoken of Eve, He would have said to the serpent : ' I now put enmity between thee and the woman,' making His speech refer to the present and not to a future time, Eve being then present ; but having said, ' I will put,' He meant to say that the enmity predicted was a thing to come ; that a time would arrive when a woman would appear as the enemy of the devil, for the very purpose of repairing, through her Divine Son, the evil caused by Eve herself, and consequently she could not be the same Eve. Calmet, commenting on the said prophecy (Comm. on the Book of Genesis, chap. iii.), observes : ' This is one of the clearest and most express prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind, and conqueror over the devil. The woman who was to crush his head is the Blessed Virgin, who caused the diminution of the power

and the empire of Satan by giving birth to Jesus Christ, the conqueror of all the malice of the enemy of man, and the destroyer of sin which formed the empire of Satan. In the Hebrew text the relative and the verb relate to the Son of the woman, to her posterity, and accordingly the first words of the text should have been 'The woman's posterity shall crush thy head.' However, the translation of the Vulgate is followed by St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and by almost all the rest of the fathers.' The same interpretation is given by Cornelius à Lapide (in his Commentary on the Book of Genesis, chap. iii. 15), saying, 'There are three interpretations of this passage: the first is taken from the Hebrew codex, which has *ipsium* (scilicet *semen*) *conteret caput tuum*, that is, her seed shall crush thy head, and is so read by St. Leo, and after him by Lipomanus. The second is *ipse* (scilicet *homo vel Christus*) *conteret caput tuum*: He, namely the man, or Christ, shall crush thy head. This is in accordance with both versions, viz. that of the Seventy and the Chaldean. The third is *ipsa* (scilicet *mulier*) *conteret caput tuum*: She shall crush thy head. Such is the translation of the Roman Bible, and of almost all the old Latin translations, and of St. Augustine, St. Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory, Venerable Bede, Alcuin, St. Bernard, Eucherius, Rupert, and others.'

The triumph of Judith over Holofernes was the type of the triumph of Mary over the insidious serpent. As Judith exclaimed, 'By the hand of a woman, the Lord our God has struck him;' so by the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, the devil was struck in his head. Judith is styled 'the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel, the honour of her people;' so Mary, on account of her divine maternity, became the glory of the New Jerusalem, the joy of the Christian people, the honour of the human race, as is chanted by the Church. In the garden of Eden three objects are particularly presented to us for reflection. Eve who becomes the cause of our ruin, the tree from which she took the fatal fruit, and Adam and Eve robbed of the most beautiful gifts, and meeting both spiritual and corporal death. However this triple object of horror, through Jesus

Christ and the instrumentality of Mary His Mother, disappeared: she came to replace Eve. Through Mary the fatal fruit of the tree was replaced by the wholesome fruit of her womb, which on the tree of the cross destroyed all the evil caused by the forbidden fruit of Eve; whilst the death of Adam and Eve was repaired by the death of the Son of Mary, and by the merits of Jesus Christ lost justice was recovered by our forefathers.

*2. From the earliest Fathers of the Church, Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

The Fathers of the early Church, even according to the principles of Protestantism, give evidence both of the Apostolic tradition, and of the true sense of the Holy Scripture. As such we take them in reference to the truth we maintain in the present chapter. An antithesis between our mother Eve as the cause of our ruin, and Mary, the Mother of our Lord, as the happy instrument of our redemption, has been used by the holy Fathers. Among the most ancient of them, Irenæus (adv. Hæres, l. iii. v. 19) says: 'As Eve in transgressing the command of God became the cause of death to herself and her posterity, so Mary, on the contrary, by her perfect submission to the Divine Will, has been the cause of our salvation (universo generi humano causa salutis).' Tertullian (De Carne Christi, c. xvii.) also says: 'Eve, in believing the serpent, was guilty of sin; Mary, in giving credence to the angel Gabriel, was instrumental in cancelling sin (hæc credendo delevit).' St. Jerome (adv. Jan.) likewise says: 'The Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ was promised in "that woman" opposed to the enmities of the serpent. It is said, "I will put enmities between thee and the woman." It is not said I put, because then it would have been understood to belong to Eve. It was a promise that had regard to future time.' St. Epiphanius (Hær. 78, 18), says: 'Eve became a cause of death to man, and Mary a cause of life.' St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Cat. xii. 15) says: 'Since through Eve, a virgin, came death, it behoved that through a virgin, or rather



from a virgin, should life appear, that as the serpent had deceived the one, so to the other Gabriel might bring good tidings.' St. Ephrem of Syria (Opp. Syr. iii. p. 607) says : ' In the beginning, by the sin of our first parents, death passed upon all men : to-day, through Mary, we are translated from death to life. In the beginning the serpent filled the ears of Eve, and the poison spread thence over the whole body : to-day Mary from her ears received the champion of eternal happiness : what therefore was an instrument of death was an instrument of life also.' St. Jerome (Epist. xxii. ad Eustach. 21) says : ' Death by Eve ; life by Mary.' St. Leno (bishop) says : ' Eve was restored in Mary, and Adam was restored in Christ' (Passaglia de Immac. B. M. Concept. sect. v. No. 920). St. Augustine says (De Symb. ad Cat. l. iii. c. iv) : ' Through Eve death, through Mary salvation.' The same (Nova Patrum Bibl. tom. i. 3, 4, apud Mai.) says : ' Through Eve we have fallen ; through Mary we are raised up. Through Eve we were made slaves ; through Mary we became free. Eve, by the fruit of the tree, caused our condemnation ; Mary, by the Sacrament of the tree (being Jesus Christ, the fruit of the cross), delivered us from perdition. Eve is the mother of the human race, Mary is the Angel of Salvation ; through Eve we grow up, through Mary we reign for ever ; through Eve we were lowered to the ground, through Mary we are elevated to heaven.' And the same (Opusc. de Agon. Chr. c. xxiv.) adds : ' It is a great Sacrament, that whereas through a woman death became our portion, so life was born to us by a woman, that in the case of both sexes, male and female, the baffled devil should be tormented when, on the overthrow of both sexes, he was rejoicing ; whose punishment had been small, if both sexes had been liberated in us without our being liberated through both.'

Hence, by the concordant testimony of both the Latin and Greek Fathers, it is clear that the woman appointed by the Holy Trinity to be the enemy of the devil, and through her Divine Son to crush his head, was Mary. Thus, four thousand years before Mary's nativity, while Adam and Eve on one side were lamenting their crime, and the serpent on the

other, full of pride for his triumph over them, was exulting over them, behold Mary is destined by the Holy Trinity to be the instrument both of the humiliation of the serpent's pride, and the consolation of our repentant parents as well as the hope of all mankind.

Adam and Eve being made acquainted with the mystery of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word in the womb of Mary, perceived that in anticipation of the atonement to be offered by Mary's Son, their sin was washed away, and they were reinstated in their supernatural privileges. At such consoling intelligence extreme joy filled their hearts; and while returning thanks to God for His gracious mercy, they conceived veneration for, and confidence in, that glorious woman who was to be the mother of their Redeemer. In Eve does Adam behold Mary, the second Eve, who was to come for the reparation of their fault; and then he joyfully (Gen. iii.) called the name of his wife Eve, because Mary was the spiritual mother of all the living.

Indeed, that the said words could not refer exclusively to Eve appears clear for this reason, that Eve through her sin had been the cause of death, not only to herself but also to her husband and all their descendants, so that she deserved rather to be called the mother of the dead, than mother of the living. Therefore the words of Adam referred rather to the second Eve, to Mary, who had to come, and to whom truly belonged the appellation of Mother of all the living. Such is the explanation of St. Epiphanius (lib. iii. Hæres. 78) upon the aforesaid text, who says that 'such a name is given enigmatically to Mary.' 'She it is who is signified by Eve enigmatically receiving the appellation of the Mother of the living. . . . From Mary the Life itself was born in the world, that Mary might bear living things, and become the Mother of living things.' Hence St. Ambrose (De Inst. Virg. lib. viii. Oper. t. iii. p. 313, Migne) exclaims 'How great benefit we received by the sex, who generated Christ, without loss of virginity! Come therefore Eve, made Mary (jam Maria), who brought to us not only the incentive of virginity but God also.' St. Augustine (Serm. li. Oper. t. v. p. 383, Migne) says: 'To deceive man poison was pre-

pared by a woman : to repair man, salvation is prepared by a woman, a woman giving compensation for the sin of the deceived man by generating Christ.'

How great then is the mystery of divine mercy ! While man becomes rebellious to his Creator, God shows to him His tender merciful heart. He tells the serpent that a woman shall come who, through her Divine Son, should crush his head ; and this same woman, it is said by the mouth of Adam, shall become the Mother of all the living. Nay, as the obedience of Mary to the angel's message was present to the Divine Mind with the mystery to be accomplished on her assent, so she became virtually intercessor for her first mother, Eve, so that Mary is called by St. Irenæus 'the advocate of Eve.'

Now the reader will consider the influence of the Blessed Virgin in relation to the salvation of our forefathers as well as of us all, and the right she has to our veneration and confidence.

### 3. *From Christian Archæology.*

To show the fall of our first parents, as well as the promise of a Redeemer, and the accomplishment of the Incarnation of the Son of God through the Blessed Virgin Mary, we exhibit, under fig. 6, a sarcophagus of the earliest antiquity, excavated outside the gates of Rome near the church of St. Lorenzo. In this important monument three different subjects are represented. The first shows Adam and Eve, after their sin, repenting and hoping for pardon through the merits of a future Redeemer. The second represents Moses receiving from God the written law, in which the promise of the coming of the Messiah is expressed. The third presents to our contemplation the Blessed Virgin sitting in a large chair and holding the Divine Infant, whom she offers to the adoration of the Magi as the Redeemer so long expected by mankind. In this monument, therefore, are indicated the three laws : the law of nature in Adam and Eve ; the written law of Moses ; and the law of grace in Mary holding up the Divine Redeemer as the object and perfection of all laws.

FIG. 6.



FIG. 7.



Moreover, it is to be observed, that in the said sarcophagus Mary shows her Divine Infant to Adam and Eve, as the remedy for their sin ; to Moses, as the end of the law ; and to the Magi, as the true God and man, to be adored and served by all. The above sarcophagus has been mentioned by several Christian antiquarians, and particularly in the work, '*Roma subterranea*' (tom. iii. plate 1, table xxxi.).

Under fig. 7 we exhibit another ancient monument bearing the same idea as in the preceding sarcophagus, but differently arranged, which we have borrowed from Arringhi (tom. ii. lib. iv. cap. xlvii. 395).

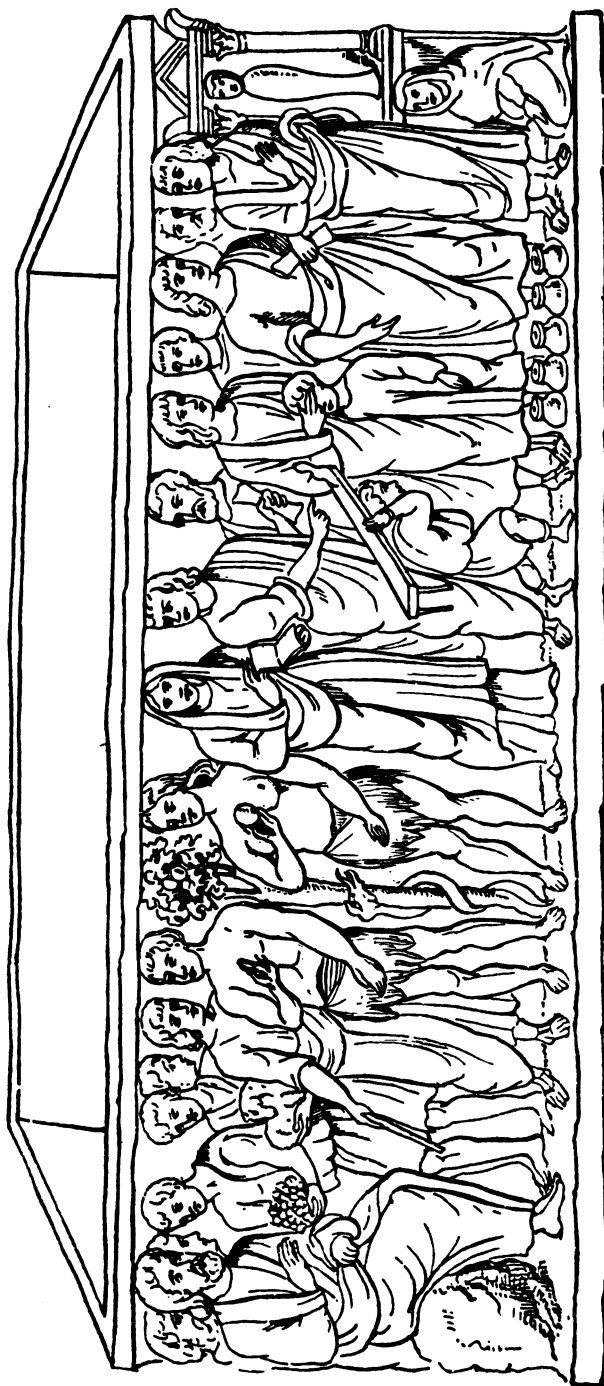
Under fig. 8 we show another sarcophagus, found in the cemetery of Lucina, and referred to by the same Arringhi (tom. i. lib. iii. chap. iii. 563), in which are represented God the Father ; secondly, Abel and Cain offering sacrifice to God ; thirdly, the repentant Adam and Eve ; fourthly, our Blessed Saviour, at the right hand of Adam, as the Mediator with God the Father ; fifthly, the Blessed Virgin, in the middle of the sculpture, holding a book, as it were the register of the oracles of the prophets, relating to the incarnation of the Son of God and her divine maternity. Besides, there are expressed several miracles wrought by Jesus Christ in confirmation of His being the Son of God and the expected Messiah, viz. the curing of the man with the palsy, who took up his bed ; the giving of sight to the blind man ; the conversion of the water into wine ; the healing of the woman who had an issue of blood twelve years ; and the resurrection of Lazarus.

## SECTION II.

### EVIDENCE DRAWN FROM THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

In the present section we intend to show that the Vulgate version of the Bible is conformable to the other different versions in various languages with regard to the text (Gen. iii. 14) cited in Section I.

**Fig. 8.**



*Hebrew* : 'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : it shall crush thy head and thou shalt crush its heel.'

*Greek LXX.* : 'And I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. He shall catch thy head and thou shalt catch His heel.'

*Syriac* : 'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed : it shall tread on thy head and thou shalt strike Him on His heel.'

*Targum Onkelos Chaldaic* : 'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy son and her Son. He shall remember for thee what thou hast done to Him from the beginning, and thou shalt observe for Him until the end.'

*Arabic* : 'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy race and her race : and she shall cleave thy head from thee, and thou shalt bite her in the heel.'

*Samaritan* : 'I will also put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall crush thy head and thou shalt crush its heel.'

*English Protestant Authorised Translation* : 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.'

Now, by comparing together the foregoing translations, it is clear that the obvious meaning of them all is the same, conformable to the Catholic version. The Arabic translation is more identical. In the other translations, instead of *she*, is read *he* or *it* ; but by such a difference the sense of the passage is unaltered, as in all, the seed of the woman is opposed to the seed of the devil, and on account of that opposition the head of the enemy of the human race was to be crushed, and his kingdom destroyed.

## SECTION III.

## PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

LUTHER (Serm. Domest. Devot. par. 1. 'Of Summer') says: 'The Infant Jesus is represented as crushing the head of the serpent. It brings to mind most forcibly and most clearly the very first promise which God gave of the Messiah to Adam and Eve, when He said, "The seed of the woman shall one day crush the head of the serpent."'

Bishop Pearson, in his 'Exposition of the Creed' (London, 1692, Art. iii. p. 171), says: 'The promised Messiah was to be born, after a miraculous manner, to be the son of a woman, not of man. The first promise of Him seems to speak equally as high: the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head; for as the name of this seed is not generally or collectively to be taken for the generation of mankind, but determinately and individually for that one seed which is Christ, so the woman is not to be understood with relation to man, but particularly and determinately to that sex from which alone immediately that seed should come.'

Thomas Scott, 'The Holy Bible' (Gen. iii. 15), says: 'It seems probable that the serpent was previously beautiful and harmless. . . . The curse upon Satan contains the sum of all the blessings which a merciful God bestows on sinful man. It is a prophecy and a promise; He is called the SEED of the woman, and not the seed of Adam, not only because Satan had prevailed first against the woman, but likewise with an evident prophetic intimation of His miraculous conception and birth of a pure Virgin.'

Maimon, an eminent Jewish writer, says: 'This is one of the passages in Scripture which is most wonderful and not to be understood according to the letter, but contains great wisdom in it.'

It is remarkable that this gracious promise of a Saviour was given unsolicited, and previous to any humiliation on the part of man. Without a revelation of a mercy-inspiring hope of forgiveness the convinced sinner would have been in despair. This intimation, therefore, formed that encourage-



34 *The Mother of Him who crushed the Serpent.*

ment to hope, which was followed by true repentance and true religion (as it is generally supposed in fallen Adam and Eve).

Dr. Adam Clarke, in his 'Commentary on the Old Testament' (London, 1836, vol. i.), commenting on the above, says: 'It was in consequence of this purpose of God that Jesus Christ was born of a Virgin.'

John Gill, D.D., in his work, 'An Exposition of the Old Testament' (London, 1852, p. 22), says: 'The Messiah, the eminent seed of the woman, should bruise the head of the old serpent, the devil—that is, destroy him and all his principalities and powers; all which was done by Christ when He became Incarnate and died.'

Matthew Henry, 'An Exposition of the Old and New Testament' (Gen. iii. p. 3) marked at bottom, says: 'Here was the dawning of the Gospel day; no sooner was the wound given than the remedy was provided and revealed. . . . Herein God magnifies His grace in that though the woman was first in the transgression, yet she shall be saved by child-bearing (as some read it), that is, by the promised seed which shall descend from her.'

Bishop Bull, 'On the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin' (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 265), says: 'The Blessed Virgin Mary was the only woman that took off the stain and dishonour of her sex by being the instrument of bringing that into the world which should repair and make amends for the loss and damage brought to mankind by the transgression of the first woman, Eve. By a woman, as a principal cause, we were first undone; so by a woman, as an instrument under God, a Saviour and a Redeemer is born to us. And the Blessed Virgin Mary is that woman.' And the same writer (page 266) adds: 'She, so holy a Virgin, was the happy instrument of the saving Incarnation of the Son of God, who hath effectually crushed the old serpent, the devil, and destroyed his power over all those that believe on Him, and thereby she became the instrument of comfort to Eve, and all other sinners.'

## CHAPTER III.

MARY CLAIMS FURTHER VENERATION ON ACCOUNT OF HER VIRGINITY MADE KNOWN BY THE HOLY TRINITY THROUGH THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

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## SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From the Holy Scripture.*

It has been already proved in the preceding chapter, that the Blessed Virgin Mary, by being elected by the Holy Trinity to be the mother of Him who was to crush the serpent's head, was made an object of veneration and confidence to all generations. We shall proceed in the present chapter to show that Mary claims further veneration on account of her spotless virginity made known by the Holy Trinity through the prophet Isaiah.

Both the sublimity of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God and the high dignity to which Mary was to be raised by becoming His Mother, required that her fecundity should not be like that of the rest of women, but completely and miraculously different; and this by being possessed of power entirely divine through the operation of the Holy Ghost, who, far from taking away her virginal integrity, rather improved and consolidated it. Such a prodigious event as a sign of God's omnipotence, as well as a mark of the dignity of the future Mother of the Son of God, was announced by the Blessed Trinity, through Isaiah the prophet, eight hundred years before its accomplishment.

The expectation of a Redeemer to come for the restoration of mankind, was spread in antiquity among the Jews in

a plain and expressed manner, while the same among the Gentiles was involved in fabulous comments. The Jews received it from a revelation coeval with Adam's offence, repeated afterwards to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and more clearly to Moses and the prophets. The Gentiles, too, had some particular warnings of the coming of the Redeemer, either through the patriarchs, from whom the notice might have passed to the Chaldeans, and from these successively to the Egyptians, the Grecians, and the Romans; or through a particular revelation, as may have been the case with Job; or through revelation of idols and oracles, in particular that of Apollo, of which several records are found in history. The future Redeemer then was in antiquity the expectation of all nations.

Such a notion of an expected Redeemer of mankind brought into the world another and similar notion, viz. of a virgin-mother of the Redeemer, to be blessed by all generations; which notion came down also from the earthly paradise by those words said by God to the serpent (Gen. iii. 15): 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head.' To this virgin-mother allusion was made amongst the Jews by the patriarchs, and more especially by the prophets Isaiah (vii. 14), Jeremiah (xxxi. 22), and the Psalmist (Ps. lxxxiii.). From Drach (*troisième lettre, première partie, Prophétie d'Isaïe vii. Rome, 1833, chap. i. et ii.*) has been demonstrated, that the ancient synagogues and early rabbis bear testimony of an ancient tradition relating to the supernatural conception of the Messiah and his birth from a virgin. Before speaking of the prophecy of Isaiah, as the object of the present thesis, we think proper as an introduction to it, to show to our readers the spreading of the said notion in the pagan world so as to form part of their Theogony. The Brahmins believe that a God-made man should be born from a virgin through divine operation, and it is from it that they derive the incarnation of their Juggernaut and the birth of Krishna in a grotto, where he was adored by angels and shepherds. The Lamas have their Buddha, born from Maha-Mahai, or Maya, a virgin in her mind and good-will. Sommonokhodom,

the god and legislator of Siam, is the son of a virgin made pregnant through the rays of the sun. Lao-Tseu was incarnate in the womb of a virgin, who is compared to the jasper on account of her beauty. In Paraguay a beautiful woman became mother while remaining virgin; and her son, after working many miracles, went to heaven, and was transformed into the sun. At Thibet, at Japan, and in some parts of India, the god Fo was incarnate in the womb of the nymph Lhamoghiuprul, the promised spouse of a king, and the most beautiful and saintly of all women. In China, Shing-Mu, the most celebrated among the goddesses, conceived by the contact of a flower, and her son being brought up by a fisherman, became a great man and worked also miracles. The Egyptians believe that Apis was divinely conceived through a celestial fire. Among the Druids a virgin had to give birth to the Saviour. From this and other evidence it appears, that a persuasion had prevailed in paganism, having its foundation in the primitive tradition, that a conception and nativity from a virgin had to take place supernaturally, though the Gentiles perverted this tradition, so as to transfer it to their gods and heroes.

Now to this common persuasion, not only of the Jews but also of the Gentiles, the Prophet Isaiah alluded as a thing well known, when he said (vii. 14), 'Behold *the* Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son,' viz. *the* Virgin, well known, and spoken of from the beginning, when God said to the serpent, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head;' that woman is the Virgin who shall conceive and bear a Son. For this reason, he uses the word *virgin* with the *article*, indicating a thing already known, *הַ* *עַלְמָה*, and promises that her Son is to be called by a symbolical name, 'God with us.'

That such is the true meaning of the said prophecy of Isaiah, evidence is afforded by learned Protestant Churchmen and writers. Bloomfield (in Matt. i. 23) says: 'The earlier translators seem to have thought the article pleonastic. But the researches of later philologists have shown that it is very rarely such, though its sense cannot always be expressed. Here it is used *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, and denotes (as Dr. Owen and

Bishop Middleton observe) that *particular virgin who was prophesied of from the beginning, and whose seed was to bruise the serpent's head.*' The same article is used by Thomas Scott, who says: 'The Virgin of the house of David,' &c., as may be seen in Section III., p. 55, (Protestant Evidence).

The following are circumstances which gave rise to the said prophecy. David's sons had degenerated from the faith and justice of their fathers; and King Ahaz, who reigned at that time, was an impious idolater, who met with a wretched death in the year of the world 3278. The prophet Isaiah had spoken to him on the part of God, and foretold to him the result of the war in which he was engaged; but Ahaz not believing him, the prophet told him, so that he might not entertain any doubt in this matter, to ask a sign of God, which Ahaz declined to do. Whereupon a sign was given by God Himself, that was for the safety of the kingdom of David, and such a sign was, that the Virgin should conceive and bring forth a child, who should be called Immanuel, or God with us.

No doubt can be entertained that Isaiah spoke of Mary in his prophecy, because, as had been observed by Calmet (Comm. sur les Livres de l'Ancien Testament: Paris, 1824, p. 639), this promised son could not be meant to be Zachariah, son of Ahaz, because this prince at that time was only nine or ten years old, as he had succeeded his father, who had reigned only sixteen years. Nor can it be said that he was the son of Isaiah himself, because his son had only one of the many qualifications pertaining to the son who was to be born—the true Immanuel; and it was before he had attained the age of discretion that his country was to be delivered from its enemies. The prodigy, therefore, promised by God to the house of David (as the aforesaid author explains) is this—'A son shall be born of the virgin, who shall be called Immanuel (God with us), and this son born of the virgin is Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary.' Tirinus (Comment. in Sac. Scrip.) upon the same text, says: 'In the Hebrew we read, "Behold the virgin pregnant and bringing forth a son;" where not only is her virginity asserted before the conception and the impregnation, but

also after her delivery. *Halmack* is never used in the Scriptures to indicate any other than *one who is a virgin untouched by man*. Now it is clear that in this place Isaiah has foretold the conception of Christ in the virginal womb of Mary; and this is a truth of faith, as appears from Matthew (i. 2), where he says, that through the pregnancy of Mary by the Holy Ghost what was said by God through the prophet has been verified: "Behold the virgin shall bear in her womb," &c.; and no Christian can entertain any doubt on this matter.'

This truth has been stated by the Evangelists. St. Matthew (i. 22) relates that the angel of God appeared to St. Joseph and disclosed to him that Mary had conceived through the operation of the Holy Ghost: 'Fear not, said the angel to him, to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost; and she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled what the Lord spoke by the mouth of the prophet saying: 'Behold the virgin shall be with child and bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel.' The same appears from the assurance given by the Archangel Gabriel to Mary herself. When she asked how her virginity could be compatible with her maternity, he said to her, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee' (Luke i. 35). Hence, according to St. Jerome, in the Punic language, which is believed to be derived from Hebrew sources, a virgin is called *Alma*, and by *Alma* is meant a *hidden virgin*. Indeed God's dignity required that His Son should be born in a different way from that of other men, in a miraculous manner.

The perpetual virginity of Mary was also the subject of a prophecy of Ezekiel (chap. xl. 2), who figuratively speaks in this way: 'And the Lord said to me, This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it, because the Lord God of Israel hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.' It appears clear that Ezekiel here alludes to the perpetual virginity of Mary.

2. *From the Early Fathers of the Church, Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

Not only by the Holy Scriptures, but also by the constant tradition of the early Fathers of the Church, Mary's perpetual virginity is vindicated.

St. Irenæus (adv. Hær. iii.) says: 'What Eve, a virgin, bound by incredulity, that Mary, a virgin, unloosed by faith.' St. Ephrem (Orat. de Margarita pretiosa) says: 'By the conception of Christ, Mary's integrity remained untouched, as the same was saved by giving birth to the Son.' St. Ambrose (Ep. 7, ad Siricium) says: 'This is the virgin, who being virgin conceived and brought forth the Infant.' St. Augustine (Serm. 14, de Temp.) says: 'Such is the Almighty power that it causes her fecundity, while it keeps inviolable her virginity.' And the same Holy Father (Epist. 3. ad Valent.), 'To be born of a virgin was so great a miracle in Christ that nothing could be greater.'

St. Peter Chrysologus (Serm. 142) turning to Mary says: 'In thy conception and in the bringing forth of thy child, thy purity has increased, thy chastity is augmented, and thy integrity strengthened.' St. Gregory of Nissa (in Serm. Nat. Chr.) says: 'The angel announced the child, but she says how shall it be in her virginity, since a flesh consecrated to God had to be kept entirely unspotted.' This self-same doctrine is held by all the Fathers of the Church from the first to the last, and has been illustrated by them with several similitudes. As the first woman was created from the substance of the first man, that is, from one of his ribs, without any injury to Adam, so the body of Jesus Christ was formed by the immaculate flesh of the Virgin, without any man's intercourse, and without any injury of Mary's integrity. Likewise as the rod of Aaron being dry wood was naturally unfit for budding, yet provided fruit, giving fresh almonds; so the Virgin Mary, against the ordinary laws of nature, provided the Son of God. Again; as a ray of the sun diving into a glass goes away without the least injury to the glass, but rather adding to its clearness and illumining power, so the Deity could not injure the Virgin Mary either by His coming

into her womb or by going out, but rather imparted to it an addition of original splendour. Besides, it is a fact that, in the Old Testament, we have several saintly women who were barren, as Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel, who by divine virtue became fruitful in their old age.

However, if Mary found many instances of married women who, despite their sterility, became mothers, she did not find, nor shall there ever be found, another like herself—a virgin-mother.

Nor can it be said that Mary's virginity existed antecedent only to the birth of our Lord, and that it was not perpetual. The opponents of Mary's perpetual virginity ground their assertions principally upon that text in St. Matthew's gospel, where it is said (chap. i. 18): 'When His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.' But how can it be inferred from this passage that the Blessed Virgin had any intercourse with St. Joseph after the nativity of Jesus Christ? That the above passage of St. Matthew is not indicative of any breach of virginity in Mary is clear from the Holy Fathers. St. Epiphanius observes (*Hæres.* 78) that it appears from history that none have so much as named Mary without asserting her perpetual virginity. These are his words: 'Who has ever been found who dared to name Mary without adding, even unasked, the epithet Virgin?' St. Jerome says (*adv. Helvid. lib. un. n. 19, Oper. tom. ii. page 203, edit. Migne*): 'As we do not deny what is written, so we reject what is not written. We believe that God was born of the Virgin because we read it; but that Mary was married after her delivery, this we do not read.' St. Augustine says (*in Isaiah, tract. x. v. 2*): 'Perhaps Mary again gave birth to a child? Not at all: it was from her the dignity of the Virgins began.' And the same says (*ep. xlviii. Oper. t. i. p. 510, edit. Migne*): 'Christ Virgin, the mother of our Virgin, was perpetually Virgin—Mother and Virgin.' St. Ambrose, after relating the words of the Gospel, *non cognovit eam donec peperit filium*, says (*de Instit. Virg. ch. v. p. 315, edit. Migne*): 'What is to be learned by this? Perhaps afterwards they had intercourse? No such



thing.' Mary is called, therefore, by the Universal Church, the Virgin by excellence, the Virgin of virgins (*Sancta Virgo virginum*), and as such she is entitled to be venerated and acknowledged by all Christians as the purest of all virgins, during the entire time of her life.

Nor can any analogy whatever be admitted between the perpetual virginity of Mary and the virginity of the pagan Vestals. We learn from history that these were so venerated in the capital of the pagan world that they were regarded almost as divinities, so much so that, whenever the Roman emperor, even by accident, met one of them in the streets, he not only made her take precedence of him, but even retired several paces, not daring to pass near her. What, then, must we say of the Blessed Virgin Mary? Is she not entitled, on account of her virginity, to be venerated by all Christians, much more than the Vestals were by the pagans? But what comparison can be formed between the Vestal virgins and Mary? The virginity of the Vestals, according to St. Ambrose (lib. i. de Virgin. Oper. tom. iii. p. 194, Migne), was rewarded by money; it was temporary, and accompanied with great vanity. Their virginity, in the first place, was temporary, as they professed their virginity not for life, but only for a definite period, which being ended, they used to give themselves up to all sensual pleasures; while Mary's virginity was perpetual, and consisted (as is the essential characteristic of virginity) in the constant and fixed determination of preserving the purity and integrity of her body. In the second place, the professed virginity of the Vestals was compensated from the public revenue, while the virginity of Mary was quite disinterested, and preserved for the sole motive of pleasing God. Moreover, the virginity of the Vestals consisted principally in the exterior, so far as to exclude all intercourse with men; but the virginity of Mary excluded any act whatever tending to sully the integrity of her body. Finally, the virginity of the Vestals was full of pride and vanity; while the virginity of Mary was based on the most profound humility, rendering her virginity pleasing to God, and worthy of being rewarded by Him with the most signal favours.

Mary, moreover, was the first and most perfect example of perpetual virginity. Before her time the state of virginity in females seemed to be an object of ignominy, and sterility was considered a malediction. As the Jewish women generally hoped to be the mother of the future Messiah (without considering that He should be born of a virgin), if they had no issue they were sad and wept for their sterility. Of this number were Sarah, Rachel, Hannali, the mother of Samuel, and other holy women of the Old Testament. Mary only, as destined to be an extraordinary example of a holiness unknown to all previous generations, was inspired by the Holy Trinity to make this perpetual and celestial vow of virginity, and she observed it so inviolably and perfectly that the Catholic Church came to call her 'holy and immaculate virginity' the personification of virginity, the virginity most nearly approaching to the incorruptibility of God. She indeed was a spotless virgin at every period, and under every circumstance of her life; virgin and mother; virgin in her body before her delivery, in the time of her delivery, and after her delivery; virgin in her thoughts, in her words, in her deeds; in a word, in all the senses of her body, as well as in all the affections of her heart; Virgin by pre-eminence.

But to approach the subject more closely we must observe, in the first place, that the virginity of Mary was superior to that of all human beings. Of course there were others who before her had kept their virginity, as was the case with the prophets Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, and Daniel; but nobody before Mary had confirmed this virtue by perpetual vow. Such a perpetual vow, and such full consecration to God of her whole self, body and soul, was unknown before our Blessed Lady. There never had been, nor shall there ever be, a more innocent lamb, a more pure dove, a more angelic creature, than was Mary—a prodigy of spotless purity.

In the second place the virginity of Mary was even higher in merit than that of the angels: indeed, the angelic spirits are virgins by nature—Mary was so by grace; and by it she was superior to them, grace being a supernatural gift. The angels are exempt from every stain of impurity, but are so

from the necessity of their nature and without merit, while Mary's condition is as pure as that of the angels, and this condition being free and voluntary is in consequence also meritorious. The angels do not feel the least inclination to impurity; but it is not extraordinary in them, being pure spirits; while Mary, although clothed with human flesh, does not feel the least inclination to carnal concupiscence, and this, by a miracle of grace, after she had been preserved from original sin, which raised her above her natural condition.

But Mary's virginity not only is superior to that of all men and angels, but approaches as near as possible in a pure creature to that of God Himself. Indeed, the incomprehensible mystery of the Unity and Trinity, and of the Trinity and Unity in God, is the result of its infinitely fecund virginity and of its infinitely virginal fecundity. For God is one in nature because He is simple, and at the same time is trine in person because He is fecund. His perfect integrity without division, without parts, without mixture, constitute His Unity; and His perfect fecundity, by which one person proceeds from another—the Father generating His Son, and the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son—forms the conjunction of the Holy Trinity. Now the Blessed Virgin Mary, in her capacity of Mother of the Son of God, had the privilege of participation (as far as a pure creature is capable) in the infinite purity which her divine Son had from God, His Father; so that His second nativity should not degenerate from His first. Hence, as the fecund virginity of His divine Father is the principle of His divine nativity, so the fecund virginity of His holy Mother is the principle of His human nativity. St. Jerome (ep. xxii. ad Eustoch. tom. i. p. 406, Migne), upon the text of Isaiah (xi. 1), 'Exiet virga de radice Jesse,' says, 'The rod is the Mother of the Lord, single, pure, sincere; not inherent to any extrinsic germ, but to the likeness of God, becoming fecund while single.' That is, as God the Father alone brings forth the Word without mother, so Mary alone, without a husband, brought forth Jesus Christ. What veneration, then, does not Mary deserve on

the part of all Christians for her incomparable virginity? Is it not with reason that the holy Fathers teach that our esteem for, and veneration of, the Blessed Virgin Mary must exceed that of all martyrs, confessors, virgins, patriarchs, prophets, angels, archangels, thrones, dominations, cherubim and seraphim? Indeed, which among the saints can claim, on account of his or her virginity, to approach so near to God, the first virgin? Which of them can say he or she has united so miraculously two extremes, incompatible in themselves, the most pure virginity and the most admirable fecundity? Which of them can say, I am like the ever Virgin Mother of God? And, notwithstanding all this, how comes it that we find persons still speaking so disrespectfully of the Blessed Virgin as to put her on a level with other women? How comes it that they can say that the Blessed Virgin does not deserve to be distinguished from the vestal Virgins?

It is true that Mary contracted marriage with St. Joseph, but such espousals did not in the least violate her virginal integrity. Such a marriage, although a true marriage, had only the effect of complying with the exigencies of the laws, and of giving to Mary's virginity a saintly guardian, professing likewise perpetual virginity. St. Augustine (lib. xxiii. Canto Faust. c. 8) says: 'By maintaining that Joseph had not conjugal intercourse with Mary it cannot be inferred that he was not her husband, as St. Matthew relates that Mary was called wife by the angel, though she had not conceived by intercourse with Joseph, but through the Holy Ghost.' And St. Ambrose (in Luc. lib. ii. n. 5, Oper. t. ii. 1555, Migne) says: 'You must not be astonished if the Scripture frequently calls Mary wife, because the celebration of matrimony means not the loss of virginity, but the testimony of marriage.' And the same holy Father (ib.) adds: 'She was really married, but still remained a virgin because she is the type of the Church, which is immaculate but spouse.' Mary's marriage was necessary for several reasons. Mary was to appear a married woman before the eyes of men, otherwise what would have been the judgment of the world, seeing Mary's pregnancy, and afterwards carrying a child in her

arms? Secondly, had not Mary been married, her Son would have been, according to general opinion, illegitimate; and the Jews, who were so quick in calumniating Jesus Christ, would certainly not have omitted to reproach him with so shameful a birth. Thirdly, had Mary not contracted marriage she would have been deprived of a guardian and assistant in her wants. Hence Mary, on finishing her education in the sanctuary, was legally married to Joseph, who was destined by divine providence to be her fit spouse, as he himself, according to tradition, had already determined to observe in the married state a virginal continence. Nor can it be said that the vow previously made by Mary of her perpetual virginity should have excluded any idea of marriage as inconsistent with it; because Mary and Joseph, as St. Augustine observes, contracted marriage, having one and the same end; which was, not to be united save in the spirit. St. Thomas (pars 3, quæst. 28, art. 4) says: that St. Joseph made a vow of virginity together with Mary after their marriage. 'It seems,' he says, 'that the Mother of God did not absolutely make the vow of virginity before the espousals with Joseph; and, though she had the desire to do so, still she submitted her will to that of God. However, after being married, she made the vow of virginity together with her spouse.' From the above passage we understand that St. Thomas did not follow St. Augustine and other Fathers, who maintain that Mary made the vow of virginity before the marriage.

This dogma of the Catholic religion has been always believed in both the Greek and Latin churches. It appears first from the symbols of *faith*. In the Apostolic symbol we profess to believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the *Virgin Mary*. Likewise in the Nicene symbol we profess to believe that the second person of the Holy Trinity was incarnate by the Holy Ghost, and born of the *Virgin Mary*. The same is clear from the acts of the first synods of the church. The Nicene synod, in the year 325 (act vi.), enacts thus: 'Let us have the fear of God before our eyes in all we do, soliciting the intercession of the ever spotless *Virgin Mary* our Lady and Mother of God.' The synod of Chalcedon, in the year 451, teaches that Mary

was *ever* Virgin. The Council of Ephesus, in the year 468 (can. i.), defines thus : 'Whosoever does not confess that God is really Immanuel, and by consequence that the Virgin Mary is the Mother of God, let him be anathematized.'

Likewise in the liturgies of both the Latin and Greek Churches, Mary is invoked as a *spotless Virgin*. In the most ancient of the liturgies termed that of St. James, which was the liturgy of the church of Jerusalem, the cradle of Christianity, and which was written both in Greek and Syriac, as witnessed by Assemani (Col. Lit. Eccl. Universal, t. iv. p. ii. p. 24), we read as follows : 'Let us make commemoration of the very holy, immaculate, glorious, and ever Virgin Mary.' Next comes the liturgy called that of St. Basil, which became general in all Eastern churches, so that it is to be found in the Greek, Syriac, Coptic, and Armenian languages, and in this we read : 'Be mindful, O Lord, principally of the very holy, glorious, immaculate, full of blessings, our Lady Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary.' Likewise in the liturgy named that of St. Mark, in the church of Alexandria, written in Greek, the priest addresses the Blessed Virgin with a high voice, saying, 'Above all of the very holy, spotless, our Blessed Lady Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary.' In the liturgy of the Jacobite Copts of the said patriarchate it is said : 'Now, O Lord, by command of your Begotten Son, we commemorate the memory of your saints, principally, however, the chief of all the saints, full of glory, the ever Virgin Mother of God, Mary.' In a fragment of the Oriental liturgy, very ancient, published by Father Giorgi (Fragment. Evang. St. Johan. Greco-Copto-Hebræum, Romæ, 1789) we read as follows : 'Since, O Lord, it is the command of thy only Begotten Son that we should by communion commemorate thy saints . . . above all that of the saintly Mother of God (Θεοτόκος) and ever Virgin Holy Mary.' In the ancient liturgy of the Armenian Church there is the following commemoration : 'Commemorating the very holy Mother of God ever Virgin Mary.' In the liturgy of the Patriarchal Church of Constantinople, under the name of St. John Chrysostom, is said : 'In honour and memory of the blessed and glorious our Lady Mother of God

and ever Virgin Mary, accept, O Lord, this sacrifice upon thy celestial altar.' But coming from the Eastern Church to the Western we observe that in the Roman Church, the mistress of all churches, the invocation of our Lady as ever Virgin has been always practised, even from the time of the Apostles. Indeed the Canon of the Mass which we have at present, and which is common to all the Western churches, is that of St. Gregory the Great, and it is similar to the Sacramentaries of St. Leo and St. Gelasius, and claims its antiquity as far back as the time of the Apostles. Now in this mention of our Lady as *ever Virgin* is made twice; once before the consecration and once after it. The same must be said of such canons as are found in other liturgies of the West. The Ambrosian liturgy has the same canon as the Roman. An old liturgical MS. was found by Flaccus Illyricus, principal of the Centurists of Magdeburg, in which there is the rite of the Latin Missa, which, according to the said author, was that in use before the introduction of the Roman *Missa* and *ratio* in the time of St. Gregory. Now in these old MSS. the same invocation of the Blessed Mary, *ever Virgin*, is prescribed. Not different is the language of the liturgy of the Gallican and the Anglican Church. Usher (*Antiq. Eccl. Brit.* p. 185. London, 1687) relates that St. Germanus of Auxerre and Lupus of Troyes, being in England in the beginning of the fifth century, introduced the canon of the Gallican Church (that is, of the Roman Church), so that in the fifth century the invocation of Mary as *ever Virgin* and Mother of God was already introduced in England. In conclusion: from the testimonies of the Fathers of the Church, as well as from the symbols of faith, general councils, and all the liturgies, both of the Eastern and Western Churches, it appears evident that the Blessed Mother of God was always and by all acknowledged as ever Virgin, and as such proclaimed blessed by all generations.

### 3. *From Christian Archæology.*

The perpetual virginity of Mary is also proved by the early Christian monuments.

The first confirmation is taken from Ciampini, '*Monumenta vetera*' (t. i. tab. 49, p. 200), and from Agincourt, '*Storia dell' Arte*' (Mantova, 1841, vol. vi. tav. 16, fig. 4). It is a

FIG. 9.



portion of the mosaic of the triumphal arch in the choir of St. Mary Major at Rome, a work executed in the year 443. In this mosaic Mary is seated on a throne, among the angels,

FIG. 10.



holding a scroll of the prophecy of Isaiah. One of the angels is pointing with his right hand to the passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, in which the words, 'Behold a Virgin shall conceive



and bear a Son,' are found; while another angel from above shows the Holy Ghost descending and overshadowing her. Moreover, behind the Blessed Virgin there is a door shut up, *janua clausa*, as the symbol of her perpetual virginity, according to the prophecy of Ezekiel, already alluded to. Now, can any other monument be found more eloquent than this, of the faith and veneration of the first Christians towards the mystery of the virginity of Mary?

In the second place we exhibit a mosaic of the Church of SS. Nereo and Achilleo, in Rome, which is given by Agin-

FIG. 11.



court, 'Storia dell' Arte' (vol. vi. tav. xvii. fig. 10), in which is to be seen on one side the Annunciation, and on the other the pregnancy of the Virgin. In the former is expressed the assurance given by Gabriel to Mary, that her virginity would not suffer by the Incarnation of the Son of God. In the latter is represented Mary, who, having consented to the angel's message, became a Virgin Mother through the operation of the Holy Ghost. How particular were the ancient Christians in extolling this twofold singular prerogative of Mary's virginity and maternity!

But the said mosaic of the church of SS. Nereo and Achilleo is but a copy, or repetition, of a very ancient picture found in the Cemetery of Callisto, mentioned by the learned Bianchini in his work, '*Demonstr. Hist. Eccl.*' (tab. i. sec. ii. No. 25), and which is here given in fig. 11.

In the fourth place we exhibit in fig. 12 the Blessed Virgin holding a scroll of the Gospel, and standing between St. Peter and St. Paul. By the shut scroll may be indicated her perpetual virginity. It is taken from a sarcophagus

FIG. 12.



found in the catacomb of St. Ceriaca at Rome, and mentioned by Mrs. Jameson in her work, '*Legends of the Madonna*,' p. lxxi. London, 1864.

It seems that modern Christians, with such beautiful examples before their eyes of the veneration of the ancient Christians for Mary, ought not to be ashamed to exalt her high prerogatives. They must remember that the honour which is given to the Mother, redounds to the glory of the children.

## SECTION II.

EVIDENCE FROM THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

WE now purpose showing the conformity of the Vulgate version of the Bible with the different versions of the same Bible, in various languages, which have relation to the above text, 'The Virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son' (Isaiah vii.).

*Hebrew* : 'Behold the Virgin pregnant and bringing forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Himmanuel.'

*Greek* : 'Behold a Virgin shall conceive in the womb and shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Emmanuel.'

*Chaldean* : 'Behold a Virgin shall conceive and shall bring forth a Son, and will call His name Emmanuel.'

*Syriac* : 'Behold a Virgin shall conceive and shall bring forth a Son, and His name shall be called Ammanuel.'

*Arabic* : 'Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel.'

*Wycliffe* (1380) : 'Lo ! a Mayde shal conceyve and bern a Son.'

*Wycliffe* (another version) : 'Lo, a Vyr gyn schal conseyye and schal bere a Son.'

*English authorised* : 'Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.'

Now, by confronting all the above versions with our Vulgate, the consonance between the former and the latter is evident.

## SECTION III.

PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

DR. HENDERSON, 'On the Book of the Prophet Isaiah,' translated from the original Hebrew (London, 1840, p. 61), says : 'The sign of the allegation of the prophecy by the inspired evangelist requires to be taken in the sense of "A Virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son" (Isaiah vii. 1).

That there is no accommodation, but a strict and proper application of the prophecy as receiving its real fulfilment in our Lord's miraculous conception and birth, the peculiar force of the language sufficiently shows. . . . The very circumstance of the context in Isaiah rendered it impossible to put any other consistent construction upon the term, since it would be a flagrant violation of hermeneutical propriety to maintain, that a sign is used in a sense different from that of a miracle, to designate which it is employed.'

John Calvin, in his 'Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah,' translated by W. Pringle (Edinburgh, 1850), says: 'It is plain enough that the prophet speaks of a virgin who should conceive, not by the ordinary course of nature, but by the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit.' And the same author (p. 246) says: 'Although the word *gnālmāh*, a virgin, is derived from *gnalam*, which signifies *to hide*, because the shame and modesty of *virgins* does not allow them to appear in public, yet as the Jews dispute much about that word, and assert that it does not signify virgin, because Solomon used it to denote a young woman who was betrothed, it is unnecessary to contend about the word. Though we should admit what they say, that *gnālmāh* sometimes denotes a *young woman*, and that the name refers (as they would have it) to the age; yet it is frequently used in Scripture (when the subject relates) to a virgin. The nature of the case refutes all their slanders. For what wonderful thing did the prophet say if he spoke only of a *young woman* who conceived through intercourse with a man? It would certainly have been absurd to hold out this as a sign or a miracle. Let us suppose that it denotes a young woman who should become pregnant in the ordinary course of nature, every one sees that it would have been silly and contemptible for the prophet, after having said that he was about to speak of something strange.'

John Pearson, Bishop of Chester, in his 'Exposition of the Creed' (Art. iii.) says: 'But if this prophecy of Jeremy seems obscure, it will be sufficiently cleared by that of Isaiah, "Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Emmanuel." The ancient Jews, immediately

upon the promulgation of the Gospel, understanding well how near this place did press them, gave three answers to this text. First, denying that it spake of a virgin at all; secondly, asserting that it could not belong to Jesus; thirdly, affirming that it was fully completed in the person of Hezekiah. Whereas the original word was translated *a virgin* by such interpreters as were Jews themselves, some hundred years before our Saviour's birth. And did not the notation of the word, and the frequent use thereof in the Scriptures, imply it, the wonder of the sign given by the Lord himself would evidence as much. But, as for the conceit that all should be fulfilled in Hezekiah, it is so manifestly and undoubtedly false, that nothing can tell more for the confirmation of our faith. For this sign was given, and this promise made—a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son—at some time in the reign of Ahaz. This Ahaz reigned but sixteen years in Jerusalem; and Hezekiah, his son, who succeeded him, was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and therefore born several years before Ahaz was king, and consequently was not to be conceived when this sign was given. Thus, while the ancient Jews name him only to fulfil the prophecy, in whom it is impossible it should be fulfilled, they plainly show that, for any knowledge which they had, it was not fulfilled till our Saviour came, and therefore they cannot with any reason deny but that it belonged unto the Messiah, as divers of the ancient Rabbins thought and confessed. And this is yet more evident, by their monstrous error of expecting no Messiah in Israel, because they imagined whatsoever was spoken of Him to have been completed in Hezekiah. This is quite enough for our present purpose, which is only to prove that the Messiah promised by God, and expected by the people of God, before and under the Law, was to be conceived and born of a virgin. Secondly, as we are taught by the predictions of the prophets, that a virgin was to be the mother of the promised Messiah, so we are assured, by the infallible relations of the Evangelist, that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, whom we believe to be Christ, was a virgin when she bare Him, when she brought forth her first-born Son. That she was a virgin, when

and after she was espoused unto Joseph, appeareth by the narration of St. Luke; for the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph. After the salutation of that angel, that she was still so, appeareth by her question, "How shall this be, seeing that I know not a man?" That she continued so, after she conceived by the Holy Ghost, is evident from the relation of St. Matthew; for when she was espoused unto Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. That she was a virgin, not only while she was with child, but even when she had brought forth, is also evident out of this application of the prophecy—"Behold a Virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a Son." For, by the same prediction, it is manifest that a virgin should bring forth and conceive a son. Neither was the act of parturition more contradictory to virginity than that of conception. Thirdly, we believe the Mother of our Lord to have been, not only before and after His nativity, but also *for ever*, the most immaculate and Blessed Virgin. For, though it may be thought sufficient as to the mystery of the Incarnation that, when our Saviour was conceived and born, His Mother was a virgin . . . yet the peculiar eminency and unparalleled privilege of that Mother—the special honour and reverence due unto that Son and ever paid by her, the regard of that Holy Ghost who came upon her, and the power of the Highest which overshadowed her, the singular goodness and piety of Joseph to whom she was espoused—have persuaded the Church of God, in all ages, to believe that she still continued in the same virginity, and therefore is to be acknowledged the Ever Virgin Mary.'

Thomas Scott, in his work, 'The Holy Bible of the Old and New Testament' (vol. ii. London), commenting upon the fourteenth verse of the seventh chapter of Isaiah speaks thus: 'The Hebrew word here used most properly signifies *a virgin*, and so it is translated by all the ancient interpreters, and it is never once used in the Scripture in any other sense, as several learned men have proved, against the pretensions of the modern Jews. The primary signification of the word is concealed, because of the custom of the Eastern

countries being to keep their virgins from the view of men (South). The prophecy is introduced in so solemn a manner, the sign is so marked as a sign given and selected by God Himself, the terms of the prophecy are so peculiar, and the name of the child so expressive . . . . that we can admit of no interpretation, nor even accommodation of the prophecy, except that given by the Evangelist (Matt. i. 23), that the virgin of the house of David should miraculously conceive, and who should be known to the Church in all succeeding ages as Immanuel, God with us,—“God manifested in the flesh, and become our brother and our Saviour.”’

Bishop Bull, ‘On the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin’ (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. London, 1851, p. 268), says: ‘The necessary consequence of the dignity of the Blessed Virgin is, that she remained for ever a virgin, as the Catholic Church always held and maintained. For it cannot with decency be imagined that the most holy Vessel, which was thus once consecrated to be the receptacle of the Deity, should afterwards be desecrated and profaned by human use.’

Dr. Hicks, ‘On the due Praise and Honour of the Virgin Mary’ (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 288, London, 1851), says: ‘God the Father, who was to prepare a body for His Eternal Son, would not form it, except of the substance of one that, like the King’s daughter in the Psalm, was all glorious within, and a pure and spotless virgin both in body and mind: such a pure virgin as was foretold by the prophet who said, “a virgin shall conceive a Son;” a virgin in mind as well as body, such a virgin as never looked upon a man to lust after him; an entire virgin, who was all purity within as well as without, who never cherished unclean thoughts, nor let them grow into unchaste desires, but keeping her body as the Sanctuary of the Holy Place, and her soul as the Holiest of the Holy, and herself fit, both in body and soul, to be the habitation for the Holy Ghost and a tabernacle for the Son of God.’ He also adds (p. 325): ‘Let us acknowledge with them (the Catholics) her perpetual virginity, according to ancient tradition; and, if it will gain or oblige any of them, let us not oppose them in the opinion

they entertain, that she promised and vowed her virginity to God.' Could we expect any better confirmation of this Catholic doctrine from Protestant divines?

Luther (Oper. t. viii. p. 129) says: 'If by chance a Jew, or any one else, could show me some place where the word *halma* might signify a woman in general, and not a virgin, I would give him 100 florins.'

Also Mahomet (Koran, sura 66) gives evidence in favour of Mary's virginity, saying: 'Mary, daughter of Joram, who kept her virginity, and to whom we have sent our spirit, she causes that the Divine Word and the Holy Scripture is believed.'

It is indeed very consoling for a feeling heart to see men of different persuasions agreeing so admirably in exalting in Mary such a noble and unparalleled privilege of being a Virgin Mother!



## CHAPTER IV.

MARY IS TO BE VENERATED ALSO FOR HAVING BEEN ANNOUNCED BY THE HOLY TRINITY TO THE GENERATIONS PREVIOUS TO THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH, AS A CREATURE MOST PRIVILEGED AND BENEFICIAL TO MANKIND.

## SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From the Holy Scripture.*

ACCORDING to the economy of Divine Providence the notion of a future Redeemer of mankind was to be transmitted by tradition from generation to generation, till that happy event should be accomplished. To such a belief was to be associated another naturally connected with it—namely, that a woman should come who was to be the instrumental cause of the reparation of mankind, the immaculate vehicle or tabernacle of human redemption, by giving birth to the Redeemer. Hence the Holy Trinity, during four thousand years (such being the number of years that intervened between the sin of our first parents and the birth of the Holy Virgin Mary) caused to be made known by the prophecies, types, and figures, the Incarnation of the Divine Word, as well as the Divine Maternity of Mary.

As soon as Adam became a sinner, Mary was spoken of as the fortunate creature destined to give birth to the Saviour, and so to crush the serpent's head. 'I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head' (Gen. iii. 15); so the first page

of the history of the world is marked with the most clear and consoling prophecy relating to Mary.

Jeremiah (xxxi. 22) says: 'The Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth, a woman shall compass a man.' The passage, according to the interpretation of the Jews, is applied to the Messiah and His Mother; a woman alone should compass or conceive a man by a new and supernatural generation; no man will have a share in the fruit of her womb; and the man conceived will also be God.

Isaiah (vii. 14) says: 'Behold the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel.' The Emmanuel was Jesus Christ; and the Virgin who conceived and brought Him forth was Mary. The same Isaiah adds (xi. 1): 'There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root.' The rod out of the root of Jesse was the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Ezekiel (xliv. 2) says: 'The Lord said to me, this gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, and it shall be shut.' Which passage related to the virginity of Mary, even after having brought forth Jesus Christ.

There are other prophetic allusions to the Blessed Virgin sanctioned by the Church. In Psalm cxxxi. it is said: 'The Lord hath sworn truth to David, and He will not make it void; of the fruit of thy womb I will set upon thy Throne.' And in Psalm lxxxvi., 'The Lord loveth the gates of Sion above all the tabernacles of Jacob;' and (Psalm cxxxi.), 'Arise, O Lord, into Thy resting place: Thou and the Ark which Thou hast sanctified.' Finally (Psalm xliv.), 'The Queen stood on the right hand in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety. Harken, O Daughter, and see, and incline thine ear: and forget thy people and thy Father's house; and the king shall greatly desire thy beauty. . . . And the daughters of Tyre with gifts, yea, all the rich among the people, shall entreat thy countenance. All the glory of the king's daughter is within; in golden borders clothed round about with varieties; after her shall virgins be brought to the king; her neighbours shall be brought to thee. . . .

They shall remember thy name throughout all generations. Therefore shall people praise thee for ever, yea, for ever and ever.'

From the Book of Proverbs the following text is applied to the Blessed Virgin, as an expression of her greatness: 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways; before He made anything, from the beginning I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made. The depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived: neither had the fountains of waters as yet sprung up.' It is understood, of course, that it is only in the mind of God that Mary had existed before the world.

In the Canticles it is said (iii. 11), 'Go forth, ye daughter of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his Mother crowns him on the day of his espousals.' St. Gregory observes, that the Blessed Virgin, Mother of Jesus Christ, is believed to have crowned him with a diadem, since he took our nature from her.

From allegories let us pass on to the types and figures, which announced our Blessed Lady to the generations previous to her nativity. The description given by Solomon of the mystic spouse has always been considered by the Church as a cherished allusion to the high qualifications of Mary. In the flower of the field, and in the rose of Jericho, the beauty of her form is described; in the cypress tree of Sion, the rectitude and holiness of her morals. The ever-closed garden, the fountain ever-sealed, the lily among thorns ever-untouched, are acknowledged as the types of Mary's soul—always pure, free from all sins whatever, as well as of her spotless virginity, even in the state of a married woman. The fleece of Gideon, which was found dry in the midst of the ground filled with the dew, and the ark that floated quite alone upon the exterminating waters of the universal deluge, represented the preservation of Mary, even from original sin, with the stain of which all Adam's descendants were born. Further, she was typified in the ark and the ever-shut door, because she kept in her womb the new Noah, the restorer of the world; and in the bush seen by Moses, which, though environed with flames, was not

burnt; and in the staff of Aaron beheld by Isaiah, which budded without being watered, was signified Mary's maternity without loss of virginity. In short, as the Old Testament was a continual succession of prophecies, allegories, types, and figures of the coming Redeemer, so was it likewise of the coming of His Blessed Mother.

Moreover, as many personages of the Old Testament were the figures of Jesus Christ, so many illustrious women of the Old Law were the figures of Mary. First of all Eve is presented to us as the Mother of mankind by nature, and as the type of Mary, who became by grace mother of all generations; as, while through Eve death was introduced into the world, through Mary life was brought forth to mankind. Sarah, the mother of Isaac, comes next as the type of Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ. They are not more alike by the splendour of their offspring than by the sacrifices they had to make to God in the loss of their beloved sons. Sarah, barren for more than forty years, and then conceiving Isaac miraculously, at the word of the three celestial messengers, represents Mary, the Virgin, who at the word of the angel conceived Jesus, of whom Isaac is the most noble figure, who himself carried wood for the sacrifice of himself, though he was spared by God. Rebecca represents Mary in her prudence, and in her being the mother of Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of the people of God. Rachel prefigures Mary in her beauty and pains, and in being the mother of Joseph, the type of Jesus Christ on account of his sufferings, virtues, and triumph. Susannah typifies Mary in her chastity; Deborah represents Mary in wisdom; Abigail in the admirable meekness by which she appeased the anger of David. The power of Bathsheba over Solomon, and of Esther over Ahasuerus, indicates the power of Mary over the heart of her beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Finally, Jael, who conquered Sisera; Deborah, who subdued the Canaanites; and Judith, who slew Holofernes, and liberated Bethulia from the enemy of the people of God, prefigure Mary's victories over the most terrible of all enemies, the infernal serpent. The above-mentioned illustrious women were indeed wonderful, and manifested in some degree Mary's virtues and perfections;

but they present but a very faint idea, or pattern, of the rare perfections of Mary, who evidently surpassed them all.

Now if Mary, before coming into the world, was honoured by the Holy Trinity with so many prophetic types and figures, and had been so pre-eminently venerated previous to her nativity, who shall say that she is not an object of veneration also to us?—to us, I say, who from the history of the New Testament are aware of the accomplishment of the prophecies relating to her, and of all she has done and suffered in the work of our salvation.

2. *From the early Fathers of the Church, Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

That the prophecies, types, and figures mentioned had really relation to Mary, appears also from the holy Fathers.

St. Ambrose (Exhort. Virgin. lib. un. cap. v. tom. iii. p. 346, Migne) says: ‘Isaias spoke of Mary by those words (xix. 1), “*Ecce Dominus sedet super nubem levem, et veniet in Egyptum.*” He called Mary *cloud*, because she was clothed with flesh; and called it *swift* because she was a virgin, not laden with any conjugal load. She is the rod producing the flower, because she was a pure virginity diverted to God with a free heart, not being hindered by the cares of this earth.’ And the same holy Father (Appendix, Sermon. xlii. tom. ii. p. 689, Migne) says: ‘What is the ark but holy Mary? As the ark bore within it the table of the Law, so Mary carried the heir of the Testament. The former contained within itself the Law; the latter kept within herself the Gospel. The one possessed the voice of God; the other the word of God. The ark shone with gold, both within and without; Mary was resplendent, both interiorly and exteriorly, with the splendour of her virginity. The former was adorned with terrestrial gold; the latter with celestial.’ Hence the same holy Virgin is deservedly styled by the Church ‘the Ark of the Covenant.’ Again; the same holy Father (Sermon. v. ‘de Nat. Dni.’ Oper. tom. ii. par. ii. p. 613, Migne) says: ‘That God should descend into the Virgin, was foretold by David saying: “*Descendet sicut pluvia in vellus.*”’

St. Ephrem (Rhythm the First: 'Morris's Select Works of St. Ephrem,' p. 9) says: 'The staff of Aaron it budded, and the dry wood yielded fruit! Its mystery is cleared up to-day, for virgin womb a child hath borne.' Again; the same holy father (ibid. p. 68) says: 'Mary he shadowed forth in a fleece (the fleece of Gideon), comely and pure.'

St. Jerome (adv. Jovin. lib. i. Oper. t. ii. p. 254, Migne) says: 'Hortus conclusus, soror mea, sponsa: hortus conclusus, fons signatus (Cant. iv. 12), that it be shut and locked is said at resemblance of the Mother of the Lord, who is mother and virgin.' The same (in Psalm lxxvii.) says: 'that cloud (Mary) was never in darkness, but always in light.'

Theodoret (Serm. super 'Una est columba mea') says, 'Solomon, looking at all orders of men, saw by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost the Incarnation of the Divine Word, and the holy Mother of God who generated Him without having intercourse with man; Mary, the most immaculate, whom all generations call, and never will cease to call, blessed, in every language of the world.'

### 3. *From Christian Archæology.*

In the early Christian monuments are also verified the prophecies relating to the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the divine maternity of Mary. To illustrate the first plate, it is to be remembered that, according to the prophet Micah (chap. v.) Jesus Christ was to be born at Bethlehem. He says: 'And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, art a little one among the thousands of Judah. But of thee shall come forth one who is to be the ruler in Israel: and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity.' And that He was born in Bethlehem is shown by fig. 8. That He was brought forth by the Virgin appears from fig. 2. That St. Joseph was present appears from fig. 5. It is said by David (Psalm xc. 11), 'He hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.' And in the same plate, under the numbers 7 and 3, are exhibited two angels as the attendants of Jesus Christ. By Isaiah was foretold the poverty of Jesus Christ and of Mary and Joseph (chap. liii.).

And that such was the condition of the Holy Family appears from the same plate (fig. 1), where our Saviour is to be seen in the manger, destitute of all comforts. In the book of Numbers (xxiv. 17) it is predicted that 'a star shall rise out of Jacob' as the sign of the nativity of the Messiah; and from St. Matthew (ii. 2) we learn that the Magi, seeing this sign, came to Jerusalem under its guidance, saying: 'Where is He that is born King of the Jews; for we have seen His star in the East, and are come to adore Him.' Now in the same plate, figs. 9, 10, 11, are to be seen the Magi, and one of them kneeling down before the Infant Jesus. The fig. 4 shows the star which appeared to them, guided them, and stopped over the place where they found the Messiah.

FIG. 13.



Finally, in fig. 12 is seen only an arm (the remainder of the body having been defaced), which we believe to be the arm of the Prophet Isaiah, indicating to the Magi the Infant Jesus. This plate has been taken from Ciampini's work, '*Monumenta Vetera*' (tom. i. p. 200), and from Bianchini's '*Demonstrat. Hist. Eccl.*' (tab. ii. sec. 1). The original is the mosaic of the Triumphal Arch of the Liberian Basilica of Sta. Maria Maggiore of Rome, made in the year 443 by Pope Sixtus III. This being one of the oldest public Christian monuments of the age when liberty was first granted to the Church, it shows both the faith of the Christians of the preceding centuries, as well as the perfect analogy between the Old and New Testament with regard to the mystery of the Incarnation, in which the Blessed Virgin Mary had so prominent a part.

But besides the said beautiful church monument, there are many others of a more ancient date found in the Roman catacombs, which confirm the same fulfilment of the prophecies. As the prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles to the Christian religion is the most expressive of all, and the one most frequently exemplified in Christian antiquity,

FIG. 14.



so we think it proper to bring forward here several examples of the same, taken from different ancient cemeteries in Rome. In all these monuments the Blessed Mother of God is found to occupy a most prominent place, seated with the Divine Child in her arms, and presenting Him to the Magi to be acknowledged and adored as their God. Hence in the fig. 14 we exhibit the Blessed Virgin in her chair, holding her Divine Infant, and receiving the gifts of the Magi. This

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picture was found in the Cemetery of Calisto, and is illustrated by Arringhi (tom. i. lib. iii. cap. xxii. p. 587), and mentioned also by Bosio.

A similar one is here exhibited in fig. 15, as found in the Cemetery of SS. Marcellino e Pietro (Roma, Via Labicana) and is exhibited by Arringhi (tom. ii. lib. iv. p. 117).

FIG. 15.



Another is brought in fig. 16, as referred to by the work 'Roma Sotterranea' (tav. 40), and found in the Vatican Cemetery.

Another, found likewise in the Vatican Cemetery, and mentioned by Arringhi (tom. i. p. 327), and also in the work 'Roma Sotterranea' (tav. 38), is exhibited, fig. 17, page 68.

What a consolation for a heart that loves the Mother of

God, to see her so honoured by the Holy Trinity, during a period of forty centuries, through so many prophecies and figures! Likewise, what a clear proof of the devotion and veneration of the early Christians towards Mary are the

FIG. 16.



numerous pictures and sculptures made by them in her honour! How well calculated are these to confirm the present Christians in their belief of Mary's claim to their veneration and confidence!

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## SECTION II.

### PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

BISHOP BULL, 'On the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin' (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 265, London, 1851), says: 'The Blessed Virgin was of all the women, of all the virgins of Israel, elected and chosen by God to be the instrument of bringing into the world the long desired Messiah. All the virtuous daughters of Jacob, a good while before the revelation of our Saviour, but especially in the age when He appeared (the time wherein they saw the more punctual and remarkable prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah fulfilled), desired, and were not without hope, each of them, that they might have had the honour done unto them. But it was granted to none of all those holy women and virgins, but to the Virgin Mary. And, therefore, all generations shall call her blessed.'

Dr. Hickes, 'On the due Praise and Honour of the Virgin Mary' (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 288, London, 1851),

says: 'We may be assured from the holiness of God the Son, the Eternal Word of the Father, that He would not take upon Him the seed of Abraham but of one of the

FIG. 17.



genuine daughters of Abraham, nor deign to be conceived in the womb of any woman, but of such an one who was a vessel of honour, in whom the Spirit of God did dwell, and whose very body was the temple of the Holy Ghost. To be

chosen for the Mother of God was the greatest honour and favour that ever God conferred upon any human creature . . . and, therefore, we may be sure that God would not have done so great an honour to any daughter of Abraham, but to one who best deserved it; to one of the holiest of the daughters of Israel; to the most heavenly minded virgin of the tribe of Judah, and the Royal House of David, who had no superior upon earth.'

Thomas Pruett, 'An Illustration of the Liturgy of the Church of England' (vol. i. p. 473, London, 1820), says: 'The Son of God at the appointed time was conceived in the womb under the extraordinary and irregular influence vouchsafed by the Holy Ghost, the overshadowing power of the Highest, and was born in a way different from the law of nature. The Lord now in mercy, instead of judgment, having created a new thing in the earth born of a pure Virgin, so declared by prophecy and by the inspired historians, named Mary, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, both being of the house of David, of which it had been prophesied He should come, as it was predicted that in Him the seed of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob, all nations, all families of the earth should be blessed. He was born also in the city of David, called Bethlehem, according to prophecy. The Holy Thing thus born of her was called the Son of God.'

Bishop Pearson, 'An Exposition of the Creed' (Article iii. p. 169, London, 1692), says: 'As the name of Jesus was the same with *Joshua*, so that of Mary was the same with *Miriam*. The first of which names recorded was the daughter of Ameram, the sister of Moses and Aaron, a prophetess, to whom the bringing of Israel out of Egypt is attributed, as well as to her brethren. As she was exalted to be one of them who brought the people of God out of the Egyptian bondage, so was this Mary exalted to become the Mother of that Saviour who, through the Red Sea of His blood, hath wrought a plenteous redemption for us, of whom that was but a type. . . . The first promise of Him seems to speak no less: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;" for, as the name of seed is not generally or collec-

tively to be taken for the generation of mankind, but determinately and individually for that one seed which is Christ, so the woman is not to be understood with relation unto man, but particularly and determinately for that sex from which alone that seed should immediately come. According to this evangelical promise followed that prediction of the prophet: "The Lord hath created a new thing on the earth, a woman shall compass a man." That creation of man is therefore new, and a creation, because wrought in a woman only without a man, compassing a man; which interpretation of the prophet is ancient, literal, and clear. But if this prophecy of Jeremiah seem obscure, it will be sufficiently cleared by that of Isaiah: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel." If the gate of the sanctuary, in the prophet Ezekiel, were to be understood of her: "This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened; and no man shall enter by it, because the Lord of Israel hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut."'

Mrs. Jameson, '*Legends of the Madonna*' (Introduction, xliv., London, 1864), speaks with much propriety and erudition of the symbols of the Blessed Virgin. We will make an abstract of the principal of them.

1. The Sun and the Moon (*electa ut sol, pulchra ut luna*) is one of the texts of the Canticles applied to Mary; and also in the passage of the Revelation, 'A woman clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet.'

2. The Star (*Stella Maris*, Star of the Sea), which is one interpretation of the Jewish name Miriam; but she is also 'Stella Jacob' (the Star of Jacob), 'Stella Matutina' (the Morning Star).

3. Lily. 'I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley' (Cant. ii. 1), as the general emblem of purity.

4. The Rose. She is the rose of Sharon as well as the lily of the valley; and, as an emblem of love and beauty, the rose is especially dedicated to her.

5. The Enclosed Garden (*Hortus conclusus*) is an image borrowed, like many others, from the Song of Solomon (Cant. iv. 12).

6. The Well ever full, the Fountain for ever sealed, the

Tower of David, the Temple of Solomon, the City of David (Cant. iv. 4, 12, 15).

7. The *Porta Clausa*, the closed gate, is another metaphor taken from Ezekiel (xliv. 4).

8. The Cedar of Lebanon (*sicut cedrus exaltata*). Exalted as a cedar in Lebanon, because of its height, its incorruptible substance, its perfume, and the healing virtues attributed to it in the East, expressing the greatness, the beauty, and the goodness of Mary.

9. The victorious Palm, the Plantain, far-spreading, and the Cypress, pointing to heaven, are also emblems of the Virgin.

10. The Olive, as a sign of peace, hope, and abundance, is also a fitting emblem of the graces of Mary.

11. The Stem of Jesse, figured as a green branch, entwined with flowers, is also very significant.

12. The Mirror without Spot (*speculum sine macula*) is a metaphor borrowed from the Book of Wisdom (vii. 13).

13. The Sealed Book is also a symbol placed often in the hands of the Virgin, in a mystical Annunciation.

14. The Bush which burned and was not consumed, is introduced, with a mystical signification, into an Annunciation.

From the symbols, the same authoress proceeds to show that the women of the old covenant are the types of the Virgin Mary. She says:—

‘Certain women of the Old Testament are regarded as special types of the Virgin. Mary is regarded as the second Eve, because through her came the promised Redemption. She bruised the head of the serpent. Rachel figures as the ideal of contemplative life; Ruth as the ancestress of David; Bathsheba, because she sat upon the throne on the right hand of her son; Judith and Esther as having redeemed their people, and brought deliverance to Israel. It is because of their typical character as emblems of the Virgin, that these Jewish heroines so often figure in religious pictures. In the beautiful frescoes of the church of St. Apollinaris at Ravenna, these Hebrew women stand together in a group below the throne of the Virgin.’ (The monuments of the

Church of St. Apollinaris of Ravenna were executed between the years 545 and 548.)

So we see Mary acknowledged by Protestants also, as having been announced and represented in various ways, before the coming of the Messiah, as a creature most privileged and beneficial to mankind, and worthy of respect and veneration.

## CHAPTER V.

MARY'S NEW CLAIM TO THE VENERATION OF CHRISTIANS, ON  
ACCOUNT OF HER IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, GRANTED HER  
BY THE BLESSED TRINITY.

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SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From Holy Scripture.*

A SON must obey his father, and a servant ought to obey his master. God is man's father and master; then he must be obeyed and served by his son and servant. When a man refuses to obey and serve God, he becomes a sinner; so that, if the transgression of the law of God be of such a serious character, which is called mortal sin, then man's eternal salvation is at stake.

Sin, therefore, is a deviation from the law of God, and it is twofold—original and actual. *Original sin*, in its essence, is the deprivation in us of original justice on account of Adam's transgression; so much so, by it all men are born children of wrath, deprived of the gift which Adam received on his creation, and, moreover, subject to all miseries which befell Adam in consequence of his transgression. *Actual sin* is any deviation from the Law of God committed by any of the children of Adam. As such a deviation may occur, either in a greater or less degree, so actual sin is to be divided into mortal and venial. That the Blessed Virgin was free from actual sin, either mortal or venial, there is no question here. She was never guilty of the least offence. Our sole object, therefore, in the present chapter is to show that our Lady was free from original sin.



The privilege of exemption from original sin conferred upon the Blessed Virgin, consists in this, that by a singular gift of Almighty God she was preserved from incurring that privation of grace, justice, and sanctity, in which our progenitors were created, and which they lost on account of their disobedience to God. Moreover, as rebellious concupiscence was the consequence of the sin of our first parents, Mary, not having contracted the sin, was also free from rebellious concupiscence, and therefore exempt from any contest between the inferior and superior part of her soul, just as were our first parents before their sin. In other words, the privilege of Mary was this, that her blessed soul was, from the first instant of its creation and union with her body, enriched with divine grace and favoured with perfect exemption from every incentive to sin. Hence, while the rest of the children of Adam are conceived in sin, the Blessed Virgin alone from the very instant of the creation of her soul and its union with her body, appeared beautifully adorned with divine grace. Such a preservation from original sin, it is understood, was through the future merits of Jesus Christ, Whose mother she was predestined to be. It is also understood that the Blessed Virgin was redeemed by Jesus Christ, like the rest of mankind; but her redemption was not like that of those who had contracted the stain of original sin. Redemption for these was a *remedy* to the evil caused by the sin of our first parents; for Mary, redemption was a *preservation* from the sin of our first parents. She shared in the benefit of redemption in the same degree with, but in a manner different from, the rest of mankind; that is, not by a grace which cancels sin, but by a privileged grace which preserved her from *incurring* sin; so that her Son died for her, not to remedy her sin, but to preserve her through His death from incurring original sin. The redemption of the rest of mankind was a liberation from a degrading captivity; that of Mary was a perpetual freedom from such captivity; so that, for the former, redemption was *recovery*; for the latter, *immunity*. By the merits of the divine Redeemer the ransom was paid, in order that His blessed mother should not be sent into captivity with the

other children of Adam. She was anticipated by the grace of God, which excluded all sin from her in the first moment of her conception. Hence St. Ambrose (in Luc. lib. ii. Oper. t. ii. p. 1559, Migne) says: 'It is not wonderful if our Lord, wishing to redeem the world, began from Mary; because it was fit that Mary, through whom the salvation of mankind was preparing, should be the first to enjoy the fruit of salvation from the pledge.' This privilege is sole and unique in Mary, because sole and unique in her was the privilege of being the Mother of God.

King David had designed materials for a great temple worthy of the majesty of God. To that end he was solicitous to accumulate the best, the richest, and most noble materials that could possibly be obtained. He procured brass, silver, gold, precious marble, the cedars of Lebanon, and all other requisites of the richest description that could possibly be obtained for the erection and decoration of this edifice. Impressed with the most just idea of the majesty of God, Who is deserving of all that is best, all that is most worthy, and of all that man is capable of achieving for His honour, David exclaimed that such an edifice designed to be the House of God, ought to be, and must be, a prodigy of grandeur, magnificence, richness, and beauty; because it was to be prepared as a habitation, not for man, but for God, 'non enim hominibus, sed Deo preparatur habitaculum.' Now Mary was elected by the Most Holy Trinity to be the living tabernacle of the Incarnate Son of God, and the dwelling-place of the Most Holy Trinity. This tabernacle God was to occupy, not merely by His invisible presence and majesty, but by His real and corporeal presence; that is, in His assumed humanity as Emmanuel, God with us. Accordingly Mary was to be the centre of a miracle the most stupendous ever witnessed by the world—a miracle never to be witnessed again. Hence such a living temple ought to be constructed and adorned with spiritual gifts so various, and of so rare a quality, that all the richness and grandeur of the Temple of Jerusalem could give but a faint idea of the variety and sublimity of the privileges of Mary. Of the mystical temple of Mary it might be said, with much more reason and truth

than of the Temple of Jerusalem, that it was designed to be the dwelling-place, not of man, but of God Himself, the tabernacle of the new covenant, the ark of His Testament which was seen in His Temple (Apoc. xi. 19).

Solomon, the successor of David, being chosen to execute his father's will, before beginning the fabric of the Temple, exclaimed: 'Who can be able to build to God a worthy house?' And after building it, again exclaimed: 'Is it credible that God should dwell with men on earth? If Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens do not contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built?' But what a difference between the material Temple of God built by Solomon, in which had to be preserved only the Tables of the Law, and the manna, and the corporal and spiritual Temple of Mary, in which the Holy Trinity was to dwell invisibly by Its Majesty, and the Second Person also corporeally as God-Man! Hence, if the Temple of Jerusalem was so noble for its earthly richness, the Temple of Mary must be most precious for her sanctity in the highest degree, in order to become the worthy house and the living tabernacle of God. She must have been free from every sin, from every spot, every imperfection whatsoever; and, more than this, she must have been enriched with the rarest and most precious of gifts, prepared by the omnipotence, the wisdom, and the love of God.

But, to return to the Temple of Solomon as the type of the Temple of Mary. When the fabric was completed, the Tabernacle prepared, and the day for the dedication had arrived; when Solomon with all the dignitaries of his kingdom and the entire people were assembled to assist at the magnificent ceremony, behold, 'a cloud unexpectedly filled the House of the Lord.' At such an event all present were amazed and terrified, and Solomon himself exclaimed: 'The Lord said He would dwell in a cloud.' So the Lord, under the symbol of a cloud, took possession of the Temple, and sanctified it by His presence. Mary was the temple of the new covenant, and this temple in the bosom of Anna was on the point of being dedicated by the presence of her blessed immortal soul; the beautiful little body of Mary is disposed to receive

it, and the celestial spirits are already assembled to assist at this new stupendous work. Behold the mysterious cloud taking possession of the Temple. Grace anticipates nature in the womb of Anna, and takes possession of Mary at the very moment that her soul is created, and united to her body ; so that, to the astonishment of Heaven, and the disappointment of Hell, she, in the first instant of her existence, is already in possession of sanctifying grace. The devil indeed must have felt at that moment that at least the Woman had come who ' should crush his head ! '

In the meantime is verified in Mary what was typified in the history of Esther. This humble queen, on presenting herself before her husband Ahasuerus without being called for by him, had incurred the penalty of death, inflicted upon every one who dared to transgress the command of the king. But Ahasuerus, with a loving heart and cheerful countenance, hastened to assure her that from the penalty of such a law she alone was exempt: he said, ' the law is not made for thee, but for all others ' (Esther xv. 13). In the same manner Mary was to appear before her Creator as a daughter of Adam, comprised in the general decree of spiritual death, like the other children ; but God, who had appointed her to be the mother of His only-begotten Son, in promulgating that penal law against fallen man, had exempted Mary from it: ' This law is not made for thee, but for all others.' God loved her, and was pleased with her from the beginning of her existence ; so that, cheerfully looking at her, He said : ' Thou art all fair, my beloved, and there is not a spot in thee ' (Cant. iv. 7). So, while all the other children of Adam, in the first instant of their lives, appear deformed and slaves of Satan, in consequence of original sin ; Mary, on the contrary, appeared all bright and immaculate. She was that Bush that remained safe amidst the devouring flames of a common conflagration ; she was that Lily among thorns, bright and untouched ; she was that happy Ark, which, amidst a universal shipwreck, remained safe and uninjured. The divine wisdom so ordained it, to show how worthy of esteem and veneration was that creature who had been appointed Mother of God. Besides, Mary, having no infection

of the original poison, had therefore none of its fatal effects ; on the contrary, we behold in her all marks of her exemption. Such was her bringing forth a Son without pain ; her flesh without incentive ; her senses without rebellion ; no war between the spirit and the flesh, not the slightest spot in her life ; in a word, not any mark of that captivity in which all the descendants of Adam were born, and a perfect freedom from the consequences of original sin, with the exception of death and the pains of life, to which Jesus Christ himself consented to be subject, in His human nature. From the very first moment of her existence, Mary was not only holy, but was also confirmed in the state of sanctity and rendered impeccable to the end, that she might not be subject to sin, nor degenerate from the state of grace, in which she had been created. And the abundance of grace, from that first instant of her being, was so copious that it could be termed fulness of grace ; not because that grace was not capable of increase, but because the abundance was such that, according to the holy fathers, she in that first moment received a greater amount of grace than all the choirs of angels and the entire multitude of saints had ever received.

Many are the obvious reasons, besides the teaching of faith, by which we are now bound, why the Blessed Virgin was conceived free from original sin. 1st. Because it was not becoming, nay rather it was most repugnant, that the Son of God who was sanctity by essence should have taken his humanity from a creature who had been subjected to the curse of sin, an element the most repugnant to sanctity. How can it be supposed that so exalted a creature, who was destined to generate the Son of God, should herself be generated in sin ? 2nd. Because if the first mother of the living, who was the ruin of mankind, was constituted in a state of grace, much more did the second mother deserve to be created in the state of grace, appointed as she was by God to be the means of the destruction of the evil caused by Eve. Was it indeed fitting that the mother of a superior order should be less privileged than the mother of an inferior order ? Was it possible that God would have granted less grace to His Mother, than to Eve, His servant ? 3rd. Because it cannot

be supposed that God would have permitted that Mary, chosen by Him to be the final conqueror of the devil, should become, even for an instant, his slave, which an infant conceived in sin must be. 4th. Because had Mary contracted original sin, the enmity between her and the devil would not have been perpetual, and it would have been contrary to the prophecy. 5th. Because in reference to some privileged saints destined for some extraordinary missions, God had restored them to original justice and sanctified them before they came into the world. One of those was the prophet Jeremiah, who (i. 4-5) says: 'The word of the Lord came unto me, saying: before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee, and before thou camest out of the womb, I sanctified thee and made thee a prophet unto the nations.' Another was St. John the Baptist, regarding whom the angel had foretold his father Zacharias (Luke i. 3), 'that he should drink no wine, nor any strong drink, and that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb.' Now the mission to which the aforesaid saints were destined by God was great and important indeed; but how much greater and more important was the mission to be fulfilled by Mary. Her mission was not limited to prepare men for their return to the right way of God, nor for the coming of the Messiah, as was that of the above-mentioned saints; but it was to bring forth the Redeemer Himself. Hence it was to be expected that some privilege higher than theirs should have been granted to her; that some greater gift of sanctity should have been bestowed upon her; so that if Jeremiah and John the Baptist were sanctified in their mother's womb after being conceived in original sin, Mary should be sanctified at the very moment of her conception, that she might be always unspotted and immaculate. Indeed, if Mary should necessarily be the most privileged of all saints, and should have possessed all graces which a mere creature could possibly possess, as all the fathers teach, it follows that she should be more privileged than Jeremiah and John the Baptist, so as to possess the grace of being free from original sin, even from the first instant of her existence. As such a grace could be given her by God, and

it was expedient that it should be given to her on account of her divine maternity, we must conclude that it was given to her; and this principally because in preparing her for this exalted function, it was to be presumed that God would have exceeded, rather than have fallen short of, the limits of human comprehension in bestowing upon her the graces and immunities with which He endowed her. It would have been an anomaly, that a creature in all other respects so exalted, in this only should not have had the preference over all. The order of Providence required such an exemption in the Mother of God.

Such a truth, having its foundation in the Word of God, in venerable tradition, in the perpetual sentiment of the Church, in the singular union of the Catholic episcopate, and agreement of the faithful (as has been declared by the holy father Pius IX. in his dogmatical bull), the same holy father defined as follows:—‘We define that the doctrine of maintaining that the most Blessed Virgin Mary at the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ the Saviour of mankind, had been preserved free from all spot of original sin, is revealed by God, and consequently as such is to be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful.’

This doctrine was greatly misrepresented by the Protestant press at the time of the publication of the dogmatical bull of the sovereign Pontiff. Among other things it was said that the Pope had defined that Mary “was not conceived by man, but by the Holy Ghost;” which is a damnable absurdity, as it was only Jesus Christ who was conceived by the Holy Ghost. In reference to Mary, the Roman Pontiff (as has been before related) defined only that ‘It was a revealed truth that Mary had been conceived without incurring original sin,’ that is to say, that her soul was not for a single moment defiled by sin in consequence of the transgression of our first parents. Such a truth was not proposed by the Pope to be believed by the faithful, as if it were a matter of his own opinion or judgment, but as a truth founded in antiquity.

Now in order to explain the grounds upon which such a definition rests, it is of high importance that the doctrine of the Catholic Church upon the development of revealed truths, should be well understood. First, it is to be observed that according to the promise of Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost taught the Apostles *all truths*, so that all things necessary for salvation, and for the high government of the universal Church, have been already either explicitly or imperfectly revealed, and are found in the tradition of the Church. Hence, when the Church proposes something to be believed by the faithful as an article of faith, such a thing is taken from what had been already revealed or confided to her. Hence Tertullian (*Præscrip. adv. Hær.* § vi.) says : ‘ We have not in our power to introduce what doctrine we please, nor are we allowed to make choice of that which another has there introduced. We are the followers of our Lord’s Apostles, who did not of themselves invent or introduce any doctrine, but faithfully and honestly delivered to the world the doctrine and practice they had received from Christ.’ For this reason the Council of Trent (*Sess. xiii.*) says, that ‘ The Holy Ghost in due time suggests such truths to the Church.’ (‘ *Spiritus Sanctus in dies suggerit Ecclesiæ eas veritates.*’) This is accomplished by illuminating the mind of the Roman Pontiff, who is the lawful interpreter of Holy Scripture, the guardian of tradition, and the inheritor of the infallibility of Peter, to the effect that he, after consulting the Catholic Episcopacy, may make known that such things are of old standing, and that they come forth from revealed antiquity. This is the process of unfolding truths as *discovered* by revelation, and proposed by the Church to be believed by the faithful.

It is not needless to be observed that the Catholic Church being founded upon the rock of divine revelation, is immutable, but not immovable. As a tree goes on increasing and developing itself, and gradually produces blossoms and fruits, while it remains immutable as to its root, and immovable from the ground it occupies, so the Church’s teaching of the present day is the same as that of the day of Pentecost, as from that time the Church has not undergone



the least change in her doctrine. Nevertheless, she does not exclude progress and development; nay, by her nature she must possess these qualities, and produce new fruits from the old root of revelation. Indeed, when Jesus Christ said to the Apostles (John xvi. 12), 'I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now,' He gave the world to understand that His doctrine should be subject to progress and development; and when He added (John xiv. 18), 'I will not leave you orphans,' He directed that such progress should be accompanied by vigilant guardianship, like that found by the child in his mother's bosom. Such guardianship was commissioned to the same successors of St. Peter, to whom He also promised His divine assistance, in order that they should not be liable to err in teaching matters of faith and morality: 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not' (Luke xxii. 32). Such is the law of progress in the Church; she possesses movement and development, but not change or alteration of doctrine. Moreover, the same development and progress is not capriciously made, but is ruled by the same head of the Church; so that a Christian is never an orphan independent and free in matters of faith and morality; but brought to receive and believe as revealed those, and only those, doctrines which are proposed by the Church to him as emanating from a revelation of Almighty God. Therefore the Church, while it excludes all profane novelty that may be opposed to the truths already believed and established, does not forbid that progress which is the effect of the successive explanation of one identical principle. It is important to recollect here the words of St. Vincent of Lirin (Commonit. against Heresy, written in the year 434, chap. xxiii.), who says: 'But peradventure some will say, Shall we have no advancement of religion in the Church of Christ? Surely let us have the greatest that may be. . . . But yet in such sort that it may be truly an increase in faith, and not a change; since this is the nature of an increase, that in themselves severally things grow greater; but of a change, that something be turned from one thing which it was, to another which it was not. Fitting it is, therefore, that the understanding, knowledge, and wisdom should by

the advance of ages abundantly increase and go forward, but yet for all that, only in its own kind and nature; that is, in the same doctrine, in the same sense, in the same judgment. In this case let the religion of our souls imitate the nature of our bodies, which, although with process of time they develope and unfold their proportions, yet remain the same that they were. There is great difference betwixt the flower of youth and the ripeness of age; yet the self-same men become old which before were young; so that although the state and condition of one and the self-same man be altered, yet one and the self-same nature, one and the self-same person doth still remain. . . . If any parts there be, which with increase of more mature years spring forth, those before were in man virtually planted in manner as the seed, so that no new thing do come forth in old men, which before had not lain hid in them, being children. . . . But if a human form be afterwards changed into some other likeness not of its own kind, or, at least, if anything be added to the number of its members, or taken from it, then of necessity the whole body must either perish, or become monstrous, or at least be weakened. In like manner Christian doctrine must follow these laws of increasing, to wit, that with years it wax more sound, with time it become more ample, with continuance it be more exalted, yet remain incorrupt and entire, and continue full and perfect in the proportions of each of its parts, and, as it were, with all its members and proper senses. And that it admit no further change, sustain no loss of its propriety, no variety in definition. . . . For the Church of Christ, a careful and diligent keeper of doctrines committed to her charge, never changes anything in them, diminishes nothing, adds nothing.' This admirable quotation explains in a clear manner the perpetual practice of the Church on this subject. The Church keeping always invariable the same belief, by the spirit of truth she possesses, proceeds from time to time according to the exigency of the occasions, and the new illustrations of the Holy Ghost, to declare, distinguish, develope, and by her authority to give vitality and strength to the component parts. To illustrate this doctrine we could bring

forward numerous instances from the history of the Church ; but we will be content with a few. In the General Council of Ephesus it was defined, that in Jesus Christ there is but one person. In the Council of Chalcedon it was defined, that in Him there are two natures. In the Third Council of Constantinople it was defined, that there are also in Jesus Christ two wills. Now, can these definitions of faith be called new dogmas? No; because they were only a development of that article of faith which teaches that Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, is the only-begotten Son of God the Father. However, from the above definitions it has been pointed out, and put in a clear light, that in Jesus Christ the personality is one, which is that of the Eternal Word; that in Him are two natures, the Divine and the Human, and that, consequently, there are in Him two wills, one proper to His divine nature, the other proper to His human nature. In defining these three dogmas, the Church made no alteration, nor introduced any novelty into the ancient dogma, but confirmed it by developing and making clear the parts contained in it.

Now the same process of reasoning is applicable to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. It is not a new truth which is now being proposed to our belief; but it is only an explanation and a development of the belief that the Church has always professed in relation to the prominent dignity, purity, and sanctity of Mary. The Church had already defined that Mary was the true Mother of God. Such a dignity required that she should be ever a virgin, and this truth being found both in Holy Writ and in the tradition of the Church, as soon as it was impugned, the Church defined it as a dogma of faith. Besides, the same dignity as Mother of God required that Mary should be free also from any spiritual stain; that she should be ever virgin, not only in her body, but also in her soul; so that she should have been exempt, not only from actual, but also from original sin. This total spiritual virginity of Mary, indeed, was not clearly stated in Holy Scripture; but it existed in the tradition of the Church, in the writings of the holy fathers, in the hearts of the faithful: it was contained in the great idea

of Mother of God made partaker of all gifts possibly to be given to a simple creature. Hence, in process of time, according to the feeling and spirit of the Church, the festival of the Immaculate Conception of Mary was introduced. According to historians, this festival was celebrated in the East in the time of the Emperor Heraclius, that is, in the seventh century. Towards the end of the eleventh the same was celebrated in England, and since in Normandy and Lyons. In the thirteenth the celebration of the same was appointed by the Emperor Commenus. In the thirteenth the same was celebrated in Armenia. In the fifteenth it was confirmed by Pope Sixtus IV. and afterwards by St. Pius V., Paul V., Gregory XV. and Gregory XVI. By the institution of this festival the Church gave the Christian world to understand that Mary had been immaculately conceived. However, this truth, though it had existed for nineteen centuries, and was generally believed, yet was not proposed to the faithful as an article of faith. The Council of Trent (in Dec. de Orig. Pec.) had already said that the Blessed Virgin Mary should not be included among the rest of the children of Adam who were declared to be born in original sin. 'It is not the intention of the Council to include in the decree the Blessed and Immaculate Mary Mother of God.' Still no definition of the Church had been framed upon the subject. The time fixed by Providence having at last come, the Church, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, decided that the belief, always entertained throughout the Catholic world, of the dignity, the merit, the purity, the sanctity of Mary, contained, either implicitly or explicitly, the belief of her Immaculate Conception.

Now, to illustrate this dogma, we will adduce the argument urged by St. Augustine against the Macedonians, who in the year 360 denied the divine personality of the Holy Ghost (with the Father), on the ground that it was not stated in Holy Scripture that He should be adored as the Father. The saint said that in Holy Writ many truths are stated in clear and positive terms, whilst others are included, as it were, in the spring whence they proceed, or in the principle of which they are the natural and just consequences. He observes, moreover, that the latter are not to be accounted as

less certain than the former, so that we are obliged to believe both equally without any distinction. Hence he concludes, that although in the Holy Scriptures it is not expressly stated that the Holy Ghost is to be adored, yet that the equivalent is contained in them, because they teach that the Holy Ghost is God, and as such is to be adored. Now upon the same principle we observe, that though in the Holy Scripture the Immaculate Conception of Mary is not expressly mentioned, nevertheless such a truth immediately follows from the declaration contained in the salutation of the angel, *full of grace*. 'Hail, full of grace' (Luke i. 28). When Gabriel, despatched by the Holy Trinity, calls her absolutely and indefinitely *full of grace*, he gives us to understand implicitly that Mary had been always full of grace, always and entirely possessed by the grace of God, always and in such a manner possessed by grace, that it could not be possible to mention a time or moment, in which she had not been full of grace: in a word, that she was created by God in the fulness of His grace, and that such a fulness of grace preserved her from the original infection. Hence St. Ambrose (in Luc. lib. ii. Oper. t. ii. p. 1556, Migne) observes that Mary was the only one, of whom was said 'full of grace,' because she alone had a grace that nobody else deserved to have, that is, to be filled by the very Author of grace. Here are his words: 'Deservedly she is said to be full of grace, because it was she alone that got such a grace, not deserved by any one else, to be filled with the Author of grace.' The same was said by Origen (in Luc. Hom. vii., transl. by St. Jerome, Oper. t. vii. p. 231, Migne): 'Hail, full of grace. This salutation belongs only to Mary.' Now the holy fathers, by saying indefinitely that Mary was filled with grace in preference to any one else, meant to say that Mary was always filled with God's grace even from the very moment of her conception; otherwise Mary should be confounded with St. John the Baptist, who was filled with grace a little after his conception, and it should be not true that Mary got such a grace that was not granted to any one else. To the same effect speaks St. Peter Chrysologus (Serm. cxlii. Patrolog. t. lii. p. 579, Migne), saying, '*Invenisti gratiam apud Deum.*'

Mary is blessed because she alone among creatures deserved to hear *Invenisti gratiam*. What quantity? Such a quantity that was already said: "with a fulness"; so that the whole creature (Mary), as in a large inundation, should be thrown into it, and be drowned' (*totam funderet et infunderet creaturam*). And again (Serm. cxlvi. *ibid.* p. 593), he adds: 'Mary is called mother. But when is Mary not mother?' By these last words the holy father gives us to understand that Mary in God's mind was always mother of His only-begotten Son, and as such always without any spot whatever. St. Jerome (Ep. xxii. ad Eust. Oper. t. i. p. 422, Migne) says: 'Do you follow the example of Mary, who was so pure, as to deserve to be made mother of God.' But divine maternity required that the purity of Mary should contain the exemption also from original sin. Augustine (Serm. ccxci. Oper. t. v. pt. i. p. 1318, Migne) says: 'The angel said to the Virgin Mary: 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. He who will be in thee, is already with thee;' because Mary from the first instant of her existence was possessed by the grace of God. And the same holy father (de Nat. et Grat. cap. xxxvi. Oper. t. x. pt. i. p. 267, Migne) declares that all men were sinners, 'with the exception of the Holy Virgin Mary, of whom, when treating of sins, no question is to be moved for the honour of the Lord. For hence we know that greater grace was bestowed on her to overcome sin in every respect, as she was made worthy to conceive and bring forth Him who certainly was without sin.' Now from these and other testimonies of ancient fathers, it appears that the words of the celestial messenger, 'full of grace,' implicitly contained the fulness of grace in Mary since the beginning of her existence, and that the Catholic Church, by declaring lately that Mary has been immaculately conceived, has developed such a truth as was included in the words *full of grace*, as in the fountain from which it proceeded, and of which it is a natural consequence.

The same may be said also with regard to the prophecy of Isaiah (vii. 14), 'Behold, the virgin shall conceive.' This prophecy, so clear with regard to the bodily integrity of Mary, included likewise the integrity of her soul; so that,

as she was by the Holy Ghost to be always virgin in her body, she should be the same in her soul, even from the first moment of her existence. As the conception of the Son of God had to be effected in the womb of a spotless virgin, the conception of the virgin mother should be effected by God infusing into her body a soul that should be ever pure. Such was the sense of the prophecy of Isaiah, as it seems to have been understood by the Church. Indeed the Church, by addressing the Blessed Virgin with those significant words, 'Sancta et immaculata virginitas,' means to say that Mary was so pure and virginal, both in her body and soul, that her virginity deserved to be called a perfect and finished virginity—a virginity in its fulness, corporal and spiritual; a total, perpetual, immaculate virginity; the abstract of spiritual and corporal virginity; 'holy and immaculate virginity.' Hence, as by bodily integrity or virginity is signified a preservation from any failing, breach, or rupture of the natural state of Mary's body, as received from her mother's womb, so the integrity or virginity of Mary's soul means likewise a preservation from any failing, breach, or diminution of that happy state of grace which our progenitors enjoyed at their creation; so that Mary, like Adam and Eve, together with the integrity of nature, had the integrity of grace, from the first moment of her existence. Hence, St. Ephrem (*Select Works*, Morris, Oxford, 1846, p. 53) exclaims, 'Blessed is she in whose heart and mind Thou wast!' And St. Augustine (*Supplem. ad Oper.*, *Serm.* iii. p. 1144, Migne) says: 'Mary was a virgin not only in her body, but also in her soul.' The same is said by St. Ambrose and St. Jerome; so that, according to tradition, Mary was immaculate also in her soul, that is, never corrupted by the stain of sin, either actual or original. As Mary was the first-born in the mind of God, created in the state of grace, so, while Adam and Eve by their sin became children of death, Mary remained before the eyes of God daughter of life. Hence, we may say that the prophet Isaiah meant to speak of both virginities of Mary—the corporal as well as the spiritual—as he intended to speak of a virgin who should be immaculate without any restriction. In the fourth chap-

ter of the canticle, Mary is called *a garden enclosed, and a sealed fountain*. 'My sister and my spouse is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up;' which means that in such a beautiful garden and limpid fountain nothing had ever any access that could impair the beauty of the garden and the purity of the fountain. Indeed, if the Son of God Himself had enclosed that garden and sealed that fountain, who could penetrate them? It was useless for the infernal lion to go round at the time of Mary's conception and try to infect that immaculate plant while springing up from the garden of the grace of the Creator, or to corrupt the purity of that limpid spring when arising from the waters of the celestial fount. This garden was not, like that of Eden, accessible to the incursions of the devil, but it was closed within its gates; as was said by Ezekiel (xliv. 2): 'It shall be shut, it shall not be opened;' neither for a moment shall it be opened to the influence of that pestilential breath which infected our progenitors. No, indeed, Adam's infection could not affect a soul created in the mind of God before his fault. The sentence pronounced against Adam and his posterity could not have a retroactive action, and affect her born before him. Mary, therefore, in her capacity of Mother of God, created in the mind of God before Adam, was that fortunate creature who could say of herself, as it is written in the Book of Proverbs (viii. 22-30): 'The depths [of sin] were not as yet, and I was already conceived, neither had the fountains of waters [the effects of sin] as yet sprung out; the mountains with their huge bulk [the division between God and man made by sin] had not as yet been established; before the hills [the pride and disobedience of our progenitors] I was brought forth. When He prepared the heavens [the celestial and terrestrial paradise for our progenitors] I was present, I was with Him forming all things and was delighted every day, playing before Him at all times.' There was indeed no time nor moment that Mary was not an object of delight to the archetypal mind of the Most Holy Trinity; so that, according to the expression of St. Peter Chrysologus (whose evidence is found in p. 90), *she was given in pledge to the Son of God in the very moment*



*she was created*; and by this means she was kept free from the spot of Adam and its degrading consequences. Therefore, in the prophecy of Isaiah the perpetual virginity of the soul of Mary was enclosed and enveloped in the perpetual and spotless virginity of the body, as has been expressly stated by St. James of Sarug (J. B. Abbeloos de Vit. et Scrip. St. Jacobi Episc. sec. v. ex Codice Vaticano, Loviani, 1867, p. 189), 'Mary alone was pure, and without spot. As virginity in her body, so sanctity in her soul was perpetual.' Hence the Catholic Church, which had long before affirmed explicitly the perpetual virginity of the body of Mary, and which had implicitly professed also the perpetual virginity of her soul, has at last affirmed also explicitly the perpetual virginity of her soul; that is, that Mary, by a singular privilege of God at the moment of the creation of her soul, and infusion of it into her body, was not, as others, subject in her soul to the deprivation of the supernatural grace of God, but by bruising the serpent's head she was conceived in grace. Indeed, *to bruise the serpent's head* implies to be free from original sin.

2. *From the Early Fathers of the Church, as Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrines.*

Origen (or the author of the Homilies, Hom. I. in St. Matt. c. 2) clearly says: 'She was not infected by the poisonous breath of the serpent.' And the same again: 'The Virgin Mary, immaculate Mother of God, the saint and immaculate, unique of the unique, . . . was not deceived from the insinuation of the serpent, nor she was infected by its poisonous breath.' St. Peter Chrysologus (Serm. cxl., Migne, Patrol. t. lii. p. 576) says: 'The messenger flies swift to the spouse, that he may remove and suspend the effect of human espousals; not to bring away the Virgin from Joseph, but to restore her to Christ, to whom she was given in pledge in the womb when she was made.' With the last words the holy father gives us to understand, that when Mary was created she was pledged to Christ; and if so, it is clear that she was immaculately conceived. St. Ephrem (tom. v. Orat. ad Dei Genit.) says: 'She was immaculate, and very far from any spot of original sin.' He (tom. iii. edit. Rom. 1598, p. 210)

likewise says : 'She was a virgin immaculate and inviolate, very far from the ugliness and stain of sin.' St. Maximus (Hom. in Mus. Ital. Maffei, Mabillon. tom. i. p. 23) says : 'Mary was the fit dwelling of Christ for original grace.' Bishop Theodorus (ap. Cambesius, Bibliot. Conc. t. i. p. 202) says that Mary 'is a virgin who had not contracted the wickedness of the woman ; a virgin innocent, without spot, free from all sort of sin, inviolate and spotless, holy both in her soul and body, as the lily among thorns.' St. Cyril of Alexandria (lib. vi. in Joan. c. 15) says : 'With the exception of Christ and His Blessed Mother, we are all born in sin.' St. Augustine (Lib. de Nat. et Grat. chap. xxxiv. v. 42 ; Oper. t. x. par. i. p. 267, Migne), although he was engaged to prove against the Pelagians the dogma of the transmission of original sin, did not hesitate to declare that he did not intend to speak of Mary, as we have already observed, p. 86. St. Jerome (in Psalm. lxxvii.) says : 'That cloud (the Blessed Virgin) was never in darkness, but always in light.' St. Ambrose (Serm. xxii. in Psalm. cxviii.) says that Mary 'was a virgin rendered by grace free from all spot of sin.' And he adds : 'This is the rod in which was neither the knot of original sin, nor the bark of actual.' The Nicene Council, held in the year 325, in the sixth section, says : 'Let us therefore have the fear of God before our eyes in all we do, soliciting also the intercession of the ever-unspotted Virgin Mary, our Lady and the Mother of God, and of all the angels and saints.'

It would be easy to add more witnesses, of equal antiquity, to prove that the doctrine lately defined by the Roman Pontiff is contained in the tradition of the early Church ; but the above alleged testimonies of the fact, and of the belief of it, may be thought more than sufficient. Hence we conclude that the Catholic Church has deservedly come to define as an article of faith that the Blessed Virgin Mary, among other privileges, had also this, of having been conceived free from original sin, and sanctified from the first moment of her existence in the womb of her mother, St. Ann. Let us, therefore, congratulate our Blessed Lady for such a singular and exalted privilege, and acknowledge the new claim she derives from it upon our love and veneration.

*3. From Christian Archæology.*

The reader of course will not expect that we should produce under this head such analogous monuments as might show an inherent prerogative of our Blessed Lady, like unto her immaculate conception. The early Christians, as well as those of succeeding ages, were unable to personify that idea, or express such a privilege, by any material element, except by portraying her alone, without her Divine Child, and in the act of praying. Mrs. Jameson, already mentioned, observes to our purpose: 'When she stands before us without her Son, and the apostles and saints on each side taking subordinate positions, then we are to regard her, not only as the Mother of Christ, but as the second Eve, the Mother of all suffering humanity, the woman of the primeval prophecy whose issue was to bruise the head of the serpent.' We therefore exhibit here four pictures of the Blessed Virgin without the Divine Child, and in the act of praying.

First we exhibit two little round plates, being the fragments of an old vase or pattern glass, adorned with biblical images, lately discovered at Cologne, and published by

FIG. 18.



FIG. 19.



Chevalier de Rossi in the 'Bulletino di Cristiana Archeologia,' dated, Roma, December 1864. In the first (fig. 18) is represented Adam and Eve with the tree, while tempted by the serpent. In the second (fig. 19) is represented a woman in the act of praying, having around her several symbols. This woman, according to the remarks made by the said gentleman, cannot be a simple woman praying, like the examples found in the catacombs, because in the pattern are only to be found biblical types, and therefore she must be one of the personages alluded to either in the Old or New

Testament. Now such a woman seems to be no other personage than the Blessed Virgin Mary, of whom Isaiah had

FIG. 20.



FIG. 21.



spoken, and to whom allusion is made by God in the garden of Eden, as the woman who was to crush the head of the

serpent. Indeed, on each side of the said figure are two trees, which seem to indicate the cedar-tree in Libanus, and the cypress-tree on Mount Sion. Moreover, the other plants in the lower part of the medal seem to indicate the rose in Jericho, the lily among thorns, the flowers of the fields, all

FIG. 22.



alluding to the Blessed Virgin, as may be seen in other etchings exhibited by us, which are undoubtedly images of Mary.

Next (in fig. 20) is exhibited a plate as it is taken from Arringhi (tom. ii. lib. vi. chap. i. p. 689), where Mary is alone

in the midst of symbols indicating her virtues, and in particular her spotless purity and virginity.

In the fig. 21 is represented the Blessed Virgin in the act of praying, with the same symbols as in the preceding plate, taken from the work '*Roma Sotterranea*' (tav. 5. Pitture).

By fig. 22 is shown the Blessed Virgin, likewise in the act of praying, as exhibited by Ciampini (p. 109, tab. xxxi). It is a mosaic belonging to the basilica of Teodoro in Rome, made in the year 642, or about that time.

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## SECTION II.

### PROTESTANT AND INFIDEL EVIDENCE.

BENNY, in his '*Treatise tending to Pacification*' (section xvii. p. 104), says: 'If any think it is more honourable for the Blessed Virgin to have been without sin, and thereupon for his part do rather think that by special prerogative she also was preserved from original corruption, in this or such like, whosoever will condemn all those that are not persuaded as we are, committeth an uncharitable part towards those his brethren.'

Dr. Hickes, '*On the due Praise and Honour to the Virgin Mary*' (Safeguards, vol. ii. pp. 288 and 289, London, 1851) says: 'We may be assured, from the holiness of God the Son, the Eternal Word of the Father, that He would not take upon Him the seed of Abraham, nor deign to be conceived in the womb of any woman but of such an one who was a vessel of honour, in whom the Spirit of God did dwell, and whose very body was the temple of the Holy Ghost . . . who surely must have been pure as He was pure and holy; nor could she be deceived and led away by the serpent, whose seed was to bruise the serpent's head.'

Bishop Pearson, '*Exposition of the Creed*' (Cambridge, 1849, p. 339), says: 'It was necessary we should believe our Saviour conceived and born of such a woman as the most pure and immaculate Virgin.'

Mrs. Jameson, in her work, '*The Legends of the Madonna*,'

(p. 43, London, 1864), says: 'From the time that the heresy of Nestorius had been condemned, it was not enough to advocate her excelling virtue and stainless purity as a mere human being. It was contended that, having been predestined from the beginning as the woman through whom the Divine nature was made manifest on earth, she must be presumed to be exempt from all sin, even from that original taint inherited from Adam. Through the first Eve we had all died, through the second Eve we had all been made alive. Nothing was impossible to God; it was therefore in His power to cause His Mother to come absolutely pure and immaculate into the world. Being in His power, can any earnest worshipper of the Virgin doubt for a moment that for one so favoured it would not be done? Such was the reasoning of our forefathers; and, the premises granted, who shall then call it illogical or irreverent?'

In the Alcoran (as is attested by Conivius, lib. x.; Menal. c. 10), among the articles of faith for the Mussulman, there is the following: 'Not one of Adam's children born without being bitten by Satan, except Mary and her Son.'

After the adduced Protestant and Infidel testimonies, we hope that the detractors from Mary's dignity, and of her immaculate conception, will no longer think it illogical or irreverent to venerate her as immaculately conceived.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE SALUTATION TO MARY ON THE PART OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY AS 'FULL OF GRACE' IS CALCULATED TO INSPIRE CHRISTIANS WITH FEELINGS OF PROFOUND VENERATION AND CONFIDENCE TOWARDS HER.

### SECTION I.

#### CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

##### 1. *From Holy Scripture.*

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY was called into existence by an eternal decree of Divine Providence, for the purpose of becoming a worthy Mother of God. In that capacity she was to be adorned by the Holy Trinity with as many supernatural gifts and endowments as a pure creature could be capable of receiving. It is not our object in the present chapter to discuss the different periods of the life of Mary, nor to enter into any specific statement of her admirable virtues, nor to examine the nature of the graces received by her, nor how she so perfectly corresponded to them. Our only purpose is to deal with the words of the angelical salutation, 'Hail, full of grace!' and to give a general idea of the extent of the grace given to Mary, prior to the time of the annunciation, as well as at the moment that the Holy Ghost came upon her, according to the prediction of the angel: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee' (Luke i. 35).

In a small town of Galilee there dwelt in a cottage a holy man of the name of Joseph, a descendant of the noble house of David, but who showed no marks of his noble origin. He was poor, and in order to get a living for himself and his holy spouse, he was obliged to exercise the humble calling of

H



a carpenter. Mary was the name of his virgin wife, in whose veins ran likewise the noble blood of David ; but on account of her poverty, she also had to work. Her little room was barely furnished with simple utensils, the distaff and spindle, and with only what was absolutely required for their wants. The simplicity of the eastern habits and customs was conspicuous in that happy abode. Such was the place chosen by the Son of God for the sanctuary of His Incarnation.

The Holy Scripture says (Luke i. 26-28): 'The angel Gabriel was sent by God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel going there said unto her: Hail, full of grace.' The last words of the Vulgate, 'full of grace,' correspond perfectly with the other versions, and especially with the Syriac version, made in the first or second century: 'Peace be to thee, full of grace,' or full of goodness ܡܠܝܬ ܬܝܒܘܬܗ —*maliath taiboutho*; and it is remarkable that the Aramaic language, at that time vernacular in Palestine, is very similar to the Syriac tongue, and the angel consequently must have spoken to Mary in that language. Now, what does *full of grace*, or *full of goodness*, mean? It means that, through the Holy Ghost, grace was fully imparted to Mary in the fullest abundance that a pure and privileged creature was able to bear. Of course we do not say that the fulness of grace imparted to Mary was equal to the fulness of grace in Jesus Christ; but we maintain that the immensity of grace in Mary, though far inferior to that of the Divine Son, was nevertheless far exceeding that of all others. Likewise, we do not say that such an extensive grace did not admit of any addition of grace for the future; but we only mean that the abundance of grace in Mary at that time was so great that it did not require to be greater for her to become the worthy Mother of God. Nor do we say that such fulness of grace was imparted to Mary by any title of justice, but only by the requirement of Providence, because such was due to that extraordinary woman, who had to give her own flesh and blood to form the body of her own Creator.

Indeed, it is a known axiom in theology that God gives

His grace to every one according to the exigency of his vocation, charge, or state of life. 'Deus unicuique dat gratiam accommodatam statui et muneri suo' (Saurez, t. xxii. Disp. xviii. sec. iv.). Hence the quantity of God's grace is proportional to the requirements of the vocation, position, and mission to which each person is called by God. But what was Mary's mission? It was no less than to be the true and worthy Mother of God. Now, what greatness and largeness of grace was there not required for so sublime, unheard of, unparalleled a dignity? The human intellect is quite at a loss to comprehend the immensity of so great a grace! The mission of Mary, after that of our Divine Redeemer, is supreme: therefore a supreme grace, after that of Jesus Christ, was required. If our Lord is the fountain of all graces, Mary must be the river near the spring, and the other saints in proportion, the rivulets. As Jesus Christ is called by *antonomasia* justice itself, so Mary is called antonomastically the fulness of grace, as it were her proper name. The angel does not say, 'Hail, Mary, full of grace,' but '*Hail, full of grace.*' Such a form of speech only takes place when a person is so excellent in any attribute, that that person becomes singular and unique, having no equal. Mary, therefore, being addressed by the angel with the appellation *full of grace*, it is to be concluded that, on account of her grace, she surpassed all, and never had an equal.

Hence, theologians observe, that all saints had the grace of sufficiency to succeed well in that charge or mission imposed on them by God. The Baptist had sufficient grace to be the worthy precursor of Jesus Christ. St. Peter received sufficient grace to be the worthy head of the Church of Jesus Christ. In conformity with this principle, it follows that Mary, having a mission superior to all other missions, and one more exalted in dignity than any charge which had ever been conferred, or was likely to be conferred, on any human creature, should also possess a grace of singular pre-eminence over all saints.

Mary, moreover, by consenting to Gabriel's errand, concurred in the work of the redemption of mankind, and was entitled therefore to such a merit before God as was due

to the work of redemption; that is, a merit without an equal, and incomparably superior to that of any other merit of the rest of the saints. Now, if Jesus Christ was always so liberal with the saints, and granted them singular graces for the performance of their good actions, although far below the merits of Mary, what kind of grace must He have given to Mary to show His abounding love for her, for having contributed to the rescue of mankind from the state of spiritual destitution and to their admittance into the Celestial Kingdom?

Besides, though the communication of the Holy Spirit from the moment of Mary's immaculate conception was transcendently great, still the new communication of the same Spirit at the time of her salutation as 'full of grace,' and of the conception of her divine Son, was quite singular and unheard of, so much so that the angelic Doctor says (iii. p. 9, 27, à 5 ad 2): 'In the conception of the Son of God, Mary's grace arrived at consummation, and confirmed her in good.' Indeed, the first infusion of the grace of the Holy Ghost into Mary's soul at the time of her conception was, as it were, to prepare her for her divine maternity, and to make her fit to be the Mother of God. But when the archangel Gabriel saluted her, and asked her consent to the Incarnation of the Son of God in her womb, and Mary consented to it, in that very moment, the conception of her Son being effected, Mary reached a perfect union with the Word of God, and possessed such a grace as is called by the said angelic Doctor, *gratia consummata*, 'a consummated grace,' to indicate its immensity and perfection. Indeed, the Archangel Gabriel, after having saluted Mary as 'full of grace,' added, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee.' Mary, therefore, who was already full of grace, received, besides, the Holy Ghost Himself, that is, the Author and Donor of all grace.\* Could she, then, be more favoured by God? Of

\* Origen (Hom. VII. in Luc., S. Hieron. Oper. t. vii. p. 233, Migne) says: 'Spiritu Sancto tunc repleta est Maria, quando cœpit in utero habere Salvatorem. Statim enim ut Spiritum Sanctum accepit, Dominici corporis conditorem, et Filius Dei esse cœpit in utero, etiam ipsa completa est Spiritu Sancto.' Also S. James, Bishop of Sarug in Mesopotamia, who lived in

course the Holy Spirit was already in her by great grace, but now came upon her with the fulness of a more abundant grace, with which He was to replenish her; so that she, being already full of grace, became superabundantly full of grace, as the Holy Ghost with the new grace gave to Mary the capacity of receiving it.

Let us therefore congratulate Mary on her being so highly favoured by God; salute her with Gabriel, 'Hail, full of grace;' and remember that the fulness of grace in Mary before the conception of Jesus Christ in her womb, and the superabundance of grace after His conception, was granted to her on account of her lively faith, as has been observed by St. Augustine (Serm. ccxcii. Oper. t. v. par. i. p. 1319, Migne): 'Because thou *hast conceived* by faith, by believing thou wilt have in thy womb the Son of God.' And the same holy father (*loc. cit.*) introduces Mary as saying that in her faith we have to acknowledge our salvation. Here are his words: 'You ask of me why this has been operated in me. I am ashamed to tell it to you by myself; hear the salutation of the angel, and acknowledge in me your salvation. Believe him whom I believed.'

## 2. *From the early Fathers of the Church, Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

In asserting the immaculate conception of Mary out of the words of the angelic salutation, 'Hail, full of grace,' we have already adduced in the foregoing chapter several testimonies of the holy fathers which are calculated to give evidence also for this thesis. We therefore add but a few new authorities.

Origen (upon the text, 'Hail, full of grace') says: 'I do not remember to have read elsewhere in Scripture what he (the angel) said, "full of grace," which in Greek is expressed by *κεχαριτωμένη*; nor is there any such word addressed to

the fifth century (de Vita et Scriptis, &c., Auct. J. B. Abbeloos, p. 245, Lovianii, 1867), says: 'Ipsa igitur proprio suo merito usque ad eam mensuram ascendit, donec Spiritus cuncta perficiens superveniret in eam; ex Deo fuit repleta gratiæ immensitate, ac in ejus sinu habitavit Unigenitus ut cuncta renovaret.'

any man. "*Hail, full of grace,*" is a salutation addressed to Mary alone.'

St. Basil (in Cap. II. Luc.) says: 'The Holy Virgin took to herself the whole grace of the Holy Ghost.'

St. Athanasius (Serm. in Hon. St. Ruperti) says: 'Mary was called full of grace, because, being filled with the Holy

FIG. 23.



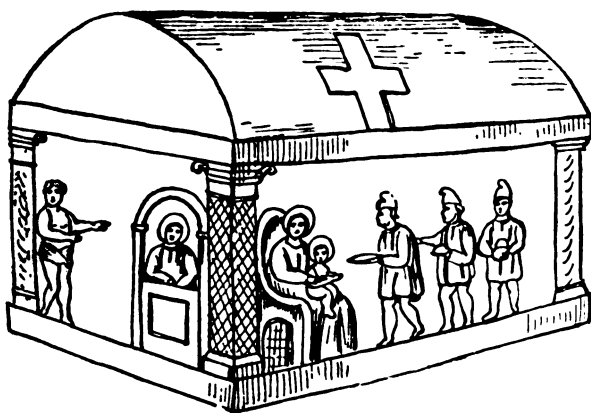
Ghost, she abounds in every grace-in preference to all the saints.'

St. Peter Chrysologus (Serm. cxl. Patrolog. t. lii. p. 576, Migne) says that the angel '*said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.*' By these words is meant, not a simple office of salutation, but an offer of dignity. *Hail*, that is,

receive the grace : do not be afraid : be not pensive. *Full of grace*, because on others descends the grace ; but on thee descends the whole fulness of grace. *The Lord is with thee* : what is the Lord in thee ? It is because He does not come to visit thee, but to effectuate in thee the new sacrament of His nativity.'

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (the Catech. Lect. xvii. p. 223, Oxford, 1838, transl. by Newman) says : 'This is the Holy Ghost, who came upon the Holy Virgin Mary ; for since He who was born was Christ the only begotten, the power of the Highest overshadowed her, and the Holy Ghost coming

FIG. 24.



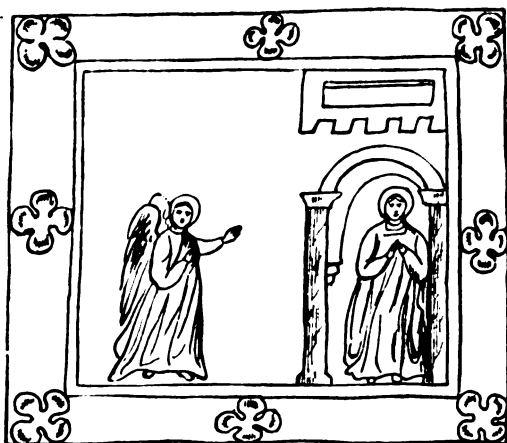
upon her, sanctified her, that she might be able to receive Him, by Whom all things were made. . . . It is Gabriel who says to her, "I am the herald of what shall be done, but I have no part in it. Though an archangel, I know mine place ; and though I joyfully bid thee All hail, yet how thou shalt bring forth is not of any grace of mine. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee."

St. Gregory Nazianzen (Serm. xxxviii. de Nat.) exclaims : 'O Virgin, in the fulness of grace thou art to be compared to none ; thou surpassest therein all the orders of the celestial hierarchy.'

3. *From Christian Archæology.*

The salutation of the Archangel Gabriel to 'Mary, as full of grace,' is often met with in the early Christian monuments. One of the most ancient is reported in the work '*Roma Sotterranea*' (tom. iii. tav. 176), as found in the fourth *arcosolium* of the Cemetery of Priscilla, Via Salaria, which is here exhibited under fig. 23. In this, the angel being dressed differently from the usual manner, there was some doubt as to his identity with the Archangel Gabriel; but,

FIG. 25.



after the observations of antiquarians made on the subject, it seems now unquestionable that it was Gabriel saluting Mary 'full of grace.'

The second monument we exhibit is a sarcophagus of the Church of St. Apollinaris of Ravenna, in the sixth century, as reported by Ciampini (pars ii. tav. 3), representing on one side the adoration of the Magi, and on the other the annunciation of the Blessed Virgin (fig. 24).

The third is taken also from Ciampini, who copied it from the ancient door of Pisa, and which is of uncertain epoch, but belongs perhaps to the eighth century. It is exhibited under fig. 25.

To the above monuments we add the testimony of Boldetti, in his work, 'Osservazioni sopra i Cimiteri de' SS. Martiri' (lib. i. cap. v. p. 21, Roma, 1720), who says: 'In a chapel of the cemetery of Callisto was discovered, some few years ago, a good and beautiful painting, representing the Virgin kneeling down, while the angel announced to her the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word.'

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## SECTION II.

FROM THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE HOLY BIBLE WITH REGARD TO THE WORDS OF THE SALUTATION OF THE ANGEL TO MARY.

*Greek*.—Rejoice, full of grace; or, Rejoice, highly-favoured.

*Syriac*.—Peace to thee, O full of grace.

*Persian*.—Peace upon thee, O full of grace.

*Ethiopic*.—Rejoice with joy, God with thee.

*Arabic*.—Peace to thee, full of grace.

*English Versions* :—

*Wicliff*, 1380.—Hail, full of grace.

*Tyndale*, 1534.—Hayle, full of grace.

*Cranmer*, 1539.—Hayle, full of grace.


*Geneva Version*, 1537.—Hayle, thou that art highly favored.

*English Authorised*.—Hail, thou that art highly favored.

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## SECTION III.

### PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

DR. HICKES, 'On the due Praise and Honour of the Virgin Mary' (Catholic Safeguards, tom. ii. p. 288), says: 'The Blessed Virgin whom he (the angel) saluted in the foregoing words, was a very holy person. . . . First, it may be shown from the word  κεχαριτωμένη, whether it be rendered, "thou that art highly favoured," or "thou that art full of grace." It is not to be imagined that an angel should be sent from God



to give such a title to any man or woman but who was a saint of the first rank. But it is much more evident that she was such an one from the matter of his message or annunciation, which was to tell her that she was to conceive and bring forth Jesus, the Saviour of the world, and that the Holy Ghost should come upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadow her, and that the Holy Child, which should be born of her, should be the Son of God. Certainly the Holy Ghost would come upon none but a pure saint. He that affects the symbols of innocence and purity in all his appearances, and cannot enter into any malicious soul, nor dwell in the body that is subject unto sin, would not have come in that manner, and for that mighty purpose, upon any daughter of Adam, but who had cleansed herself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfected holiness in the fear of God.' And the same (p. 289) adds, that 'Mary was the most heavenly-minded virgin of the tribe of Judah, who had no superior for holiness upon earth. . . . If we had no particular account of her graces, we might rationally conclude all this of her from the history of our Lord's incarnation; for nothing less than superlative holiness could receive such a testimony of divine honour from the Holy Trinity.'

Thomas Scott, 'The Holy Bible' (vol. iii. sec. 28), says: 'The Angel Gabriel was sent from God to Nazareth to the Virgin Mary, and he addressed her by saying: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured of the Lord." That is, Rejoice on account of the honour intended thee, and on which I now congratulate thee; for thou art highly-favoured of the Lord, not only as an accepted believer, but as the mother of the long-expected Messiah. The Lord is with thee in a special manner, and in this respect thou art happy above other women, and distinguished from them all.'

Bishop Bull, 'On the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin' (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 269, London, 1854), says: 'The Papists are egregious calumniators, when they charge us Protestants that we are "Beatæ Virginis conviciatores," reproachers of the Blessed Virgin. We defy their charge; we honour the Blessed Virgin as a most singular elect vessel

of God, as one in the highest degree of all mere mortals honoured by God.'

Now if the Holy Trinity sent to Mary a celestial messenger, who in their name should salute her as full of grace, what a shame for those who dare to detract from her dignity and glory! If Mary is so highly honoured by the Holy Trinity, how is it possible that a miserable child of the fallen Adam should dare to refuse to pay to her veneration and homage?

## CHAPTER VII.

MARY HAVING FREELY AND EFFICACIOUSLY COOPERATED IN THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF MANKIND, IS ENTITLED TO THE SPECIAL GRATITUDE OF THOSE WHO ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION.

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## SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From Holy Scripture.*

THE disregard, and even contempt, of some for the Blessed Mother of God, goes so far as to represent her only as a mere physical instrument of the coming of the Eternal Word among men, and not as an active meritorious element towards the spiritual perfection of man. To overthrow such a slander against our Blessed Lady, we proceed to show in the present chapter that Mary has greatly contributed to the spiritual welfare of mankind, especially by the following acts of her free will; namely, First, by making a vow unprecedented and unheard of before—a vow of perpetual virginity—the effects and consequences of which, in relation to Christian society, have proved of an immense and infinite value. Secondly, by spontaneously giving her consent to the embassy of the Holy Trinity to become the Mother of the Son of God, for the rescue of fallen man. Thirdly, by becoming by her virtue the joy and consolation of motherhood. Fourthly, by bringing through her humility God to man. Fifthly, by accepting willingly and magnanimously all the conditions, however rigorous and painful, inherent in her Divine maternity.

I. Mary, although unaware of having been chosen by Pro-

vidence to be the Mother of the future Redeemer, acted in anticipation of such a marvellous manifestation, in perfect conformity to all the designs of the Most Holy Trinity directed to this salutary end. Like the fathers and saints of the Old Testament, Mary was continually asking from God with the most ardent desire, the abbreviation of time for the rescue of the human race from the slavery of sin and Satan. 'Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above; and let the clouds rain the just one; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour' (Isaiah xlv. 8). According to venerable and authentic tradition, Mary, being a little child, dedicated herself to God in the Temple, and for the space of about eleven years remained there in the exercise of a saintly life. While living and growing up in the shadow of the house of God, Mary filled it with the perfume of the most odoriferous virtues. What obedience, what humility, what a spirit of prayer, what love of God and her neighbour! In particular, what faith, generosity, and courage did Mary show when overcoming all human respect, and the shame which sterility would have caused her in public opinion, she made the solemn vow to God of her perpetual virginity! Earth and Paradise are astonished at such an event by which she unintentionally fitted herself for the high office of Mother of the Son of God, who according to the divine decree should be conceived and born of a virgin-mother. Mary, for reasons elsewhere explained, was married to Joseph, who for his pure and virtuous life was above all qualified to be the guardian of her virginity. Hence St. Augustine (*de Oper. Monachor. lib. vii. Oper. t. vi. p. 560*, Migne), speaking of St. Joseph, says: 'That man who was just, and had been elected to be the witness of the perpetual conjugal virginity, and to whom was married the Virgin Mary, who brought forth Christ, was a carpenter.' And the same holy father (*Serm. ccxxvi. Oper. t. v. p. 1096*, Migne) adds: 'Mary being determined to keep virginity, her spouse was not a robber, but a guardian of her virginal chastity; nay, he was not a guardian because it was God that took care of her, but he was rather the witness of her virginal integrity.'

Her vow of perpetual virginity, besides fitting her for that

most high and unparalleled dignity, conferred a great blessing on Christianity. It must be remembered that Jesus Christ came into this world not only to be our Redeemer, but also to be our model and example of all virtues. Among the rest, He came to introduce the love of virginal chastity, and to exhibit to mankind a blessing of which they had no idea (Matt. xix. 12). 'There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for gaining the kingdom of Heaven.' His example, indeed, should have been enough to induce Christians to follow Him in this angelical and divine virtue. However, as He was by nature virgin and impeccable, the carnal man could find a pretext for not following it. Therefore, in order to remove objections towards embracing and cultivating this virtue, Mary in her capacity of a mere creature was chosen by Providence to give to all Christian generations a free, spontaneous, and meritorious example of perpetual virginal continency. Hence, St. Ephrem (Select Works, Morris, Oxford, 1846, p. 53), turning to Jesus Christ, exclaims: 'In her virginity Eve put on the leaves of shame. Thy Mother put on the garment of glory that sufficeth for all.' And the same holy father calls Mary 'the crown of the virgins.' St. Jerome (Ep. xxii. ad Eustochium, Oper. t. i. p. 408, Migne) says: 'When the Virgin conceived in her womb and brought forth the Infant to us, then malediction ceased. Death through Eve, life through Mary. Hence the gift of virginity plentifully shone in women, because it began in a woman. As soon as the Son of God came into this world, He instituted a new family, so that He who is adored by the angels in heaven, might have angels also upon earth.' The same (Ep. xlviii. ad Pammac. Oper. t. i. p. 510, Migne) says: 'Christ a virgin, Mary a virgin, consecrated the principles of virginity.' And again (adv. Jovin. lib. i. Oper. t. ii. p. 254, Migne), speaking of Mary, says: 'This perpetual Virgin is the mother of a large family of virgins.' St. Epiphanius (Hær. lxx. 5, 24) says: 'The Blessed Virgin is the head of the holy children of virginity.' St. Ambrose (de Instit. Virg. c. v. p. 314, edit. Migne) says: 'Mary brought to us the impulse to virginity. She raised the banner of holy virginity, and erected to Christ a pious standard of undefiled

integrity. By the example of Holy Mary all are called to follow her virginity.' And St. Augustine (Serm. li. c. xvi. Oper. tom. v. par. i. p. 348, Migne) says: 'The dignity of virginity began from the Mother of God.' St. Cyril of Alexandria (Homil. contra Nest.), turning to the Blessed Virgin, says: 'Thou art the crown of virginity.' Mary therefore is the elected type, and perfect model of this most noble and beautiful virtue of the Christian law. She is the first who professed it by vow, and it was through her that it has been introduced into the Church of Christ. From her as from a vase of celestial flowers, the rich odour of this angelical virtue began to be diffused through the atmosphere of this most corrupt world; and like a heavenly breeze dispersing the impure exhalations of the earth, has restored by God's grace the cleanliness and purity of the human heart. It has been placed at the head of virtues, and a holocaust—the purest and most perfect that earth could offer to heaven, or man to God—has been accomplished in the sacrifice of unsullied virginal purity, which was offered to the Son of the Virgin.

The mission of Mary soon became most fruitful. First of all St. Jerome remarks that St. Joseph was virgin on account of Mary, saying (adv. Elvid. Oper. tom. ii. p. 203, Migne): 'You say that Mary did not keep her virginity; but I not only maintain it, but moreover say that Joseph himself was virgin through Mary; so that from a virginal marriage should be born a virgin son. For, if no suspicion of fornication may be entertained of such a holy man, and no record be found of his having another wife, and it being known that he was the guardian rather than the husband of Mary, it follows that he remained ever virgin with Mary, and so he deserved to be called the father of the Lord.' After Joseph the Hierarchy of the Church was the first to take up and follow the standard of perpetual celibacy created by Mary. Popes, bishops, priests soon belonged to this glorious train of virgins. Their example has been followed by the fervent laity of both sexes, and of all classes and states in society, from the plebeian order to the senatorial and imperial dignity. Thousands of thousands of virgins of both sexes, like white hyacinths in a garden, adorned and filled with their odour

the Church of God. Nay, it was after the model of Mary that numberless Christians, in order to preserve the precious lily of purity, valiantly gave up their lives to death amidst the most frightful and excruciating tortures. Out of this countless army of virgin-martyrs, we may mention in Rome, SS. Agnes, Cecilia, Domitilla, Prisca, Barbara, Pretonilla, &c.; in Sicily, Agatha; in Syracuse, Lucy; in Alexandria, Catherine; in Nicomedia, Euphemia; in Antioch, Margaret; in Liconia, Julia. These, and many others in all parts of the Christian world, chose to lose their fortunes, their estates, their possessions, their friends—nay, life itself—rather than lose their virginity. In perusing the authentic acts of their martyrdom, one is struck at seeing their courage and constancy in the midst of excruciating sufferings. A philosophy perfectly divine is admired in their answers to tyrants. A beautiful mixture of cheerfulness and majesty is found in their behaviour; a calm joy beams in their faces and hearts. Susannah, a Roman lady of the highest nobility, to preserve inviolate her virginity, refused marriage with Galerius Maximian, son of the Emperor Diocletian, and courageously met martyrdom. Flavia Domitilla, likewise a Roman virgin, and niece of the two Roman Emperors Titus and Domitian, refused also to marry the son of the Consul Aurelius, and chose rather to be consumed by fire. Pudenciana and Praxedes, daughters of Pudentius, a Roman senator, after the death of their father, bestowed their patrimony upon the poor, and lived in perpetual virginity until their death. Such are the beautiful fruits of virginal purity brought by Mary.

But this is not all. Let the reader look throughout the world, and see the numerous institutions which have arisen in the various ages of Christianity for the benefit of mankind. Religious orders of both sexes, hospitals, orphanages, and many other charitable establishments for the relief of suffering humanity, are all the works of Christian celibacy. What is the secret that gives to the Catholic priesthood the courage to spend their lives in the care of souls? What is it that makes them brave all dangers, by land and sea, in order to impart the light of the true faith to pagan and

idolatrous nations? What is it that causes them not to abandon their flocks, even in times of the greatest danger? What is it that gives them courage to face death? Is it not their engagement of imitating Mary by professing celibacy? To give a very recent instance of this, we might produce several newspapers, containing the reports of the cholera, which invaded the Pontifical States in August 1867, and the works of charity and self-abnegation and zeal displayed, not only by the lower priesthood but also by the high dignitaries of the Church on that dreadful occasion. For all which, we quote some extracts from the letter written by the Bishop of Orleans, reported in the Italian journal, 'Catholic Unity,' of August 29, 1867, and in the 'Weekly Register,' London journal, August 26, 1867. In this journal it is related that the Pope, after all the fatigues endured on the occasion of the centenary of St. Peter, was advised to leave Rome for a little, and enjoy the fresh air of Castel Gondolfo. However, on the point of leaving Rome, His Holiness being informed that the cholera had made its appearance in town, he suspended his departure, and remained in Rome, 'because,' he said, 'it is not right that I should abandon my children at a time when my presence may be needful.' While the Pope was taking all possible measures to prevent the spread of the malady, some tidings reached town that the cholera was raging furiously in Albano, so that a great panic had seized the population. Cardinal Altieri, of a noble family of Rome, being the Bishop of Albano, but residing at Rome, did not lose a moment in repairing to Albano, after collecting together all the money he could find in his palace, and taking with him such physicians and apothecaries as consented to go with him. On his arrival at the gates of the town, he descended from his carriage, and without going to his palace, he went straight to visit the sick, passing from house to house, from one street to another, giving assistance to all. His presence gave courage to the sick, as well as to the whole city. For three days and nights did this great cardinal labour without rest, without intermission, and almost without food, visiting the sick, and administering the sacraments to the dying, and distributing alms to the poor. At



the expiration of that time, the pestilence seized himself, and he died the victim of his own charity, comforted by his conscience in having done his duty. When he fell sick, it was found that the episcopal palace had been so stripped by him in the three awful days, for administering to the wants of the poor, that there was neither bedding nor other necessities for the cardinal himself. But the great Bishop of Albano had two more cardinals, who by chance were there, and who, instead of flying away with the others, wished to remain there to be companions to him in assisting the sick both spiritually and corporally. They were Cardinal di Pietro and Cardinal Sacconi; the last was assistant to Cardinal Alfieri at his death, while the former continued to assist the sick. Besides the three cardinals, there came from Rome to Albano a number of religious of both sexes, and among them the Jesuits and Capuchins, with forty-five Zouave soldiers, who acted with great zeal in the assistance of the sick and in the burying of the dead. Such is the courage that Christian celibacy, introduced by Mary, gives to all classes of society from the Pope to the soldier!

Mr. George Combe, in his *Notes on the United States* (vol. ii. p. 208), says: 'When the yellow fever was raging in Philadelphia some years ago, the Catholic priests were constant in their attendance on the sick, while the other denominations rarely ventured within the walls infected with typhus. In such scenes the celibacy of the Catholic priesthood has a value.' Of course, the fear of leaving a beloved wife a widow, and a number of children orphans, is a great hindrance to a married minister from risking his life for the good of souls. Celibacy, indeed, for eighteen centuries has been the glory of the Catholic priesthood, and the source of all human beneficence, while its abolition in Protestantism has proved to be the stigma of human society. Comparatively the same applies to female celibacy. It is a sad but true historical fact, that the preaching against celibacy, and the abolition of female religious orders, produced in the reformed religious establishments immorality and delinquency to a most lamentable amount. On the contrary, among Catholics, for eighteen centuries the existence of female religious orders,

and the principles of morality, modesty and abhorrence for the vice contrary to virginity, inculcated by the Catholic Church, have prevented immorality in a great measure, and have been considered a great blessing to society. When a woman is possessed by the sentiment of chastity so that it dominates over her actions, such a sentiment is calculated to fortify public morality, and to present the female sex to men no more as a mere instrument of pleasure, but as a model of virtue and incentive to good, and an object worthy of admiration and respect. A virgin consecrated to a mortified and contemplative life is a blessing to all those around her. The presence of her edifies. The putting in mind of her relations and friends her good purpose of keeping virginity, has such a wholesome influence among them as to repress passion, to cause them to consider how they are far away from her in the path of virtue, and also to engage them to change their bad conduct. They say to themselves: my sister, my friend, is now in the asylum of security, making a holocaust to the Son of the Virgin of her youth and beauty, while I am in the midst of the world, fond of vanity and pleasures! She is praying for me, I am sure, and I am, on the contrary, so distracted by worldly things as to forget even myself! If I am not worse, if I have escaped dangers, if I still preserve some good feelings of piety and religion, I must attribute this to her! Such is the influence of virginity over the human heart, to reproach it, to move it, to convert it. Even worldlings entering into a convent of virgins, and considering the abode of peace in which they are, and looking at the inhabitants as angels, cannot help being affected. A religious virgin in a street, by her modesty and edifying behaviour, is an object of public approbation. Virginity, while it is a great merit for those who profess it, is also a spreading of morality in others. The morality of the Irish females, as well as that of the females of the Tyrol influenced by Catholicism, is proverbial. The powerful influence of the example of Mary in our days despatched throughout the world thousands of thousands of Catholic ladies to relieve suffering humanity. What a beautiful spectacle was witnessed in the United States of America during the late long and awful

war, when a numerous band of amiable, patient, industrious Sisters of Mercy of St. Vincent de Paul, as well as the Sisters of Charity of Miss Seaton, in the midst of wounded and dying soldiers, both Catholics and Protestants, were occupied with great zeal in works of the most rare corporal and spiritual charity! One you might behold employed in healing the wounds of a soldier; another giving instruction upon Christian faith; another writing down the will of a dying man; another administering medicine; another recommending to God a departing soul; another nursing a convalescent; another diligently preparing medicines, and another graciously feeding a patient. In short, they were day and night solicitous to meet all the spiritual and corporal wants of their patients. The same edifying scenes were witnessed during the Crimean war. The like courage and activity were displayed in times of the most contagious epidemic. A community of them, a short time ago, through hatred of religion were expelled from a large town. Soon after, the cholera morbus broke out in that place, and the same sisters, notwithstanding their having been turned out of it, sent a message to the citizens declaring their readiness to return and assist the sick; their proposal was readily accepted; and they returned with as much pleasure as they would have felt had they been returning among their very best friends, and undertook the management of the cholera hospitals; paid all assistance to the infected; and several of them catching the malady, died victims of Christian charity. How beautiful and wholesome are the fruits of the virginal tree of Mary! St. Ambrose (de Inst. Virg. c. xiii. lib. un.), exclaims: 'O riches of Mary's virginity!' And St. Cyril. (Catech. Lect. c. xii. transl. by Newman, Oxford, 1838) thus concludes: 'But run we all by the grace of God the race of chastity, young men and maidens, old men and children, not going after licentiousness, but praising the name of Christ. Let us not be ignorant of the glory of chastity; for its crown is angelic, and its perfection superhuman. Let us be chary of these our bodies, which are to shine as the sun; let us not for a little pleasure, pollute a body such and so constituted; for the sin is small and only for an hour, but the shame is for many

years, yea eternal. Angels on earth are they who follow chastity; the virgins have their part with Mary the Virgin. Let all vain ornament be banished away, and every hurtful look, and all wanton gait, and dress and perfumes which are the baits of pleasure. The perfume of all of us be the prayer of sweet savour, even of good works, and the sanctification of our bodies; that the Lord Virgin-born may say of us also, both of men who keep their chastity, and of women who receive the crown, I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'

II. We pass now to see also how truly Mary has been beneficial to mankind by giving her consent to the embassy of the Holy Trinity. The Archangel Gabriel being despatched to Mary, said (Luke i. 3, 9): 'Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb.' And the Evangelist St. Matthew (i. 18) relates, 'she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.' By the former text is to be seen the proposal made to Mary by the angel with regard to her divine maternity, and by the latter is shown how she actually became the Mother of God, in consequence of her assent to the angelical proposal. We dwell on the fact that the Holy Trinity would not have effected the incarnation of the Divine Word in the womb of the Blessed Virgin *unless by her own free will and consent*. God, of course, by His omnipotence, could have done it without her consent; but He did not do so, because He wished to take human flesh from her not as a passive or material instrument, but rather as an active and intelligent element. Mary was to be freely the Mother of God, she was to receive freely the Eternal Word from the hands of the Eternal Father into her womb; she was to give Him freely to the world; in a word, the annunciation of Gabriel to Mary was to be the mystery of the free cooperation of Mary in the work of redemption. Mary, by saying *fiat* for the conception of the God-man, said also *fiat* for the redemption and salvation of all mankind. She united her will, her future sufferings, her merits, to the will, the sufferings and the merits of Jesus Christ. Therefore, while the angel is talking to Mary, the Holy Trinity and all Paradise are looking on her and awaiting her answer. What a condescension on the part of God! what exaltation

of His creature! Indeed, the Holy Trinity has to wait for Mary's reply! The Creator has to make Himself, as it were, dependent on the creature! So interesting and precious is Mary before God! Quite so. Unless the consent of Mary had preceded, the Incarnation of the Son of God would not have been operated. God, who freely pronounced the *fiat* by which He created all things, does not pronounce the *fiat* for the redemption of fallen man without Mary's express consent. Until Mary first pronounced her *fiat*, God does not pronounce His. Thus God makes dependent on Mary's consent the descent of the Divine Word in her womb, the reparation of the human race, and all the benefits of the Incarnation. If the *fiat* of God effected the creation of the universe, Mary's *fiat* was required to bring about its redemption. St. Augustine, or Fulgentius (Serm. xviii. de Sanct., Oper. tom. v. par. ii. p. 2105, Migne), turning to the Blessed Virgin, says to her, 'Give, O Virgin, an answer; do it, holy Virgin; why dost thou delay life to the world? O blessed Mary, the whole world labouring in slavery and servitude beseech of thee to give the angel the assent. The world has given thee as a pledge before God. Therefore do not wait, O Virgin, and give at once to the ambassador the word, and have the Son.' Indeed, as soon as that blessed *fiat*, so long expected by all previous generations, and to be so beneficial to all succeeding ones, is pronounced, Mary, instantly, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, to the honour of virginity adds that of fecundity, and becomes the Virgin-Mother of God. Now, if Mary is so highly regarded by God Himself, with what respect ought she to be looked upon by all mankind? If God does not consider it degrading to His Divine Majesty to make Mary's will the condition of His own Divine operation, how can it be considered degrading for a Christian to bow his head before her, and show his veneration towards so exalted and noble a creature?

III. In consequence of her assent being given, Mary having become Mother of God, let us pass to consider her in the *capacity of Mother*; and having already considered her influence in Christian society on account of her virginity, let us see now how influential was her maternity in relation to the welfare

of Adam's children. We mean to speak of her maternity not so much as Mother of God (because this is the object of a separate chapter), but as mother of a family, as the *honour and model of Christian Motherhood*. Mary is to be considered as the moral ideal of the beauty of women, the type of womanly perfection; so that in her person the degraded condition of woman is restored. She is the new Eve repairing the damage caused by the first, and gloriously raising and ennobling her own sex. St. Ephrem (Morris, *Select Works of St. Ephrem*, Oxford, 1847, p. 2) says that Mary ransomed Eve's travail: 'Travail Adam on the woman brought, that from it had come forth. She to-day her travail ransomed, who to her a Saviour bare.' St. Cyril of Jerusalem (*The Catechetical Lectures*, by Newman, Oxford, 1838, p. 138) says: 'A benefit was owing to men from womankind; for Eve sprung from Adam, not conceived by a mother, but, as it were, brought forth by man alone. Mary, then, repaid the benefit, not by man, but immaculately by herself, conceiving by the Holy Ghost, through the power of God.' St. Gregory Nyssen (*Homil. de Nat. Chr.*) says: 'The woman is defended and purged through a woman. The former gave room and admittance to sin; the latter gave hand and caused the introduction of justice.' St. Augustine (*Serm. ccxxxii. Oper. t. v. par. i. p. 1108*, Migne) says: 'Because man fell through the female sex, by the female sex man was repaired: because a Virgin had been Mother to Christ, woman announced that He had risen again. By woman death came, and by woman life.' And the same holy father (*Serm. li. Oper. t. v. p. 335*, Migne) adds: 'By being born of a woman, Jesus Christ must needs have shown us some great mystery. . . . But what He showed us is this, that human creatures were not to despair of themselves in any sex, seeing that both males and females belong to a human sex. If, then, being a man, as He must needs have been, He were not to be born of a woman, women would despair of themselves, recollecting that the first sin was theirs, because the first man was deceived by a woman, and would fancy that they themselves had no hope in Christ whatever. He came then a man to choose first the male sex, and by being born of a woman to console the female sex; as

He speaks to them and says: That you may know that no creature of God is bad, but that an evil pleasure perverts it. . . . See, I am born a man! See, I am born from a woman! It is not then the creature which I made which I condemn, but the sins which I did not make. Let either sex see its own honour, and either confess its own iniquity, and either hope for salvation.' Under the new dispensation, indeed, woman is no longer the slave of man, but she is considered to be equal to him, having the same unity of origin and end, a participation in the same celestial gifts, the same relationship with Jesus Christ, and the same high destination to heavenly glory. Moreover, the monogamia, the indissolubility of the marriage, the elevation of it to the dignity of a sacrament, the protection given to it by religion, are safeguards of motherhood. When we consider that a woman has been elevated to be the mother of her own Creator, we cannot have a better idea of woman's greatness; and likewise when we see the very Son of God obeying and honouring a woman, we have no words to express the sublimity of her dignity. In Mary's divine maternity all maternities have been ennobled, extolled, and made sublime. Mary, by associating womankind to the cradle, to the cross, and other mysteries of her Divine Son, brought the woman into contact with the Divinity. In conclusion, Mary, as has been affirmed by St. Irenæus (adv. Hær. iii. v. 19) became 'the advocate of Eve,' and, we add, the joy and consolation of motherhood. The name of Mary considered from this point of view as beneficial to womankind, may perhaps, we think, have such power over the gentle and grateful hearts of the fair sex as to draw a tear of tenderness and love even from the eyes of some Protestant lady.

IV. It is the teaching of the holy fathers, that though Mary pleased God by her virginity, yet it was through her *humility* she became the Mother of God, and through her humility the mystery of the Incarnation was effected in her womb. Indeed the Blessed Mary herself tells us (Luke i. 48) that she became the blessed of all generations, because God regarded the humble disposition of her mind, and the state of humiliation in which she was: 'Because He had regarded

the humility of his handmaid, for behold all generations shall call me blessed.' And the same is affirmed by the holy fathers. Origen, commenting upon the said text (Homil. viii. translated by St. Jerome, Oper. t. vii. p. 236, Migne) says: 'Respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ, God regarded me being humble, following the virtue of meekness, and wishing to be contemned.' St. James of Nisibis (Serm. p. 273) says: 'When Christ was announced, it was by salutation He came to us, and it was owing to *humility* that Mary received Him, when Gabriel saluted Blessed Mary, and said, Hail, blessed art thou amongst women.' St. Peter Chrysologus (Serm. cxlii. Oper. t. un. p. 582, Migne) says: 'She who is called mistress by the angel, acknowledges herself and confesses to be his handmaid, because a pious soul on receiving favours, far from becoming haughty, and growing proud, increases in submission, and improves in grace.' Indeed, the humility of Mary was the humility of heart, which pleases God, and on account of it we receive divine favours; as has been observed by St. Ambrose (de Virg. lib. ii. Oper. t. iii. p. 209, Migne), saying: 'Mary was humble of heart.' Hence St. Augustine (Serm. xxxv. de Sanct.) exclaims: 'O truly blessed humility, which brought God to man, gave life to mortals, renewed paradise, purified the world, opened heaven, and delivered the souls of men from hell.' *Mary's humility* is therefore a new element towards the spiritual restoration of mankind, as without it the Son of God would not have taken from her human flesh. Hence it was from the tree of the humility of Mary that we had the first and divine type of humility, Jesus Christ, who for our sake humbled Himself unto the death of the cross. Humility introduced by Jesus and Mary produced in Christian society a new order of ideas. The spirit of pride of Eve was vanquished by the spirit of Mary's humility. Hence in all ages of Christianity a great number of believers, even belonging to the highest classes of society, despised honours, riches, and pleasures, to follow only the humility of the cross of Jesus Christ. Sabina, a noble Roman lady, while following the humility of Jesus and Mary, being asked by the pagan judge Elphidius if she were that Sabina so noble and esteemed on account of her blood and



marriage, answered that all she cared for was the grace she had received of being liberated from the power of Satan, and of embracing the Christian faith. Agatha, likewise a noble virgin of Sicily, on being tempted by Quintilianus, the prætor of Sicily, to give up the name of Christian, on the ground that it was disgraceful for a lady of her high standing and nobility to follow the humble and servile life of a Christian, answered: 'Christian humility and slavery are much more noble and valuable than all the riches and pride of kings.' In Speed's History of Great Britain (p. 24, 3) mention is made of eight kings and two queens, who, for humility's sake, renounced the world, and took the religious habit. In the preface to the "Monasticon," it is stated that within two hundred years thirty Anglo-Saxon kings and queens, in the midst of peace and prosperity, resigned their crowns to embrace the humble monastic life. Therefore it appears that in Christian society Jesus and Mary's humility was a new element in the restoration of humanity.

V. But a new argument of Mary's cooperation in the great work of human restoration is this, viz. that when she gave the affirmative to the angel, saying, 'Be it done to me according to thy word,' she, being enlightened by the spirit of prophecy, and by the Holy Ghost, was perfectly aware of the *onerous and responsible position* imposed upon her in consequence of her becoming the Mother of the Redeemer. Indeed, she was aware by the prophets how many sufferings, pains, and torments the Son of God was to endure for the redemption of mankind, and how she herself in her capacity of mother would have to share in His passion. Indeed, it is attested also by Protestants, that Mary, for her time, was well educated, not only in female domestic habits, but also in intellectual endowments. Charles Taylor (Calmet's Dictionary, London, 1832, p. 631) says: 'The acquisition of writing by a young Jewish woman adds proofs that Mary was in respectable circumstances, and had received a liberal education; for we are not to attribute to those times, and to that country, the same diffusion of knowledge as obtains among ourselves: writing and reading were rare among men, much more rare among women.' Mary, therefore, in con-

sideration also of her human knowledge, was a respectable, well-educated person. Origen (Homil. VI. in Luc., translated by St. Jerome, Oper. tom. vii. p. 231, Migne) says: 'Mary had the science of the law, and was holy, and knew by a daily meditation all predictions of the prophets, so that the salutation of the angel could not frighten her by surprise.' She, therefore, continually reading the Holy Scriptures, being illuminated by the Holy Ghost, and instructed also by the doctors of the law, was aware of, and understood, the sense of the prophecies relating to the future Messiah, so as to be able at the time of the angelical salutation to perceive how much He had to suffer for human redemption, and what share she was to have in it. Indeed, from Micheas (chap. v.) she knew that her Son had to be born in Bethlehem, a miserable town. From Isaiah (liii.) she was aware of the state of humiliation and pain which the Redeemer had to undergo: 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? And He shall grow up as a tender plant before Him, and as a root out of a thirsty ground. There was no beauty in Him, nor comeliness, and we have seen Him, and there was no sightliness that we should be desirous of Him: being despised as the most abject of men, a man of sorrow and acquainted with infirmity, and His looks were, as it were, hidden and despised; whereupon we esteemed Him not. Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows, and we have thought of Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed. He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before His shearers. . . . And the Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity; and He shall lay down His life for sin. . . . He shall divide the spoils of the strong, because He hath delivered His soul unto death, and was reputed with the wicked, and He hath borne the sins of many, and prayed for the transgressors.' This was the scene of the passion of the Son of God presented to the mind of Mary by the prophet Isaiah, and she, by accepting the proposed divine maternity,

had to witness it, nay, she had to participate in it, and feel as much as the most loving and tender mother would have done. Such a dreadful prevision was certainly no inducement to Mary to accept the office, nay, it was calculated to frighten and terrify her. However, in order to contribute as far as it was in her power to the rescue of fallen man, she readily accepted at that moment, and afterwards occasionally, all the troubles and afflictions annexed to such a painful office, and said to the angel, 'Be it done to me according to thy word.' St. Augustine (*Sermo de Aqua in Vinum conversa*, edito a Cardinali Majo, *Spicil. Rom.* tom. viii.) says: 'When Mary believed the angel, when she did not fear his embassy, and said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, then she interposed for the world, and began to patronise the cause of mankind.' St. Peter Chrysologus (*Serm. cxlii. t. un. p. 580*, Migne) adds that the angel himself was astonished, on consideration that mankind should have a new life through a woman. Here are his words: "Invenisti enim gratiam apud Deum;" this being said, the very angel wondered both that a woman should have such a grace, and that all men should have deserved to be entitled to a new life through a woman.' And that Mary at the time of the annunciation was aware of her responsible position of having to give birth to Him Who should be an object of great pain to her maternal heart, appears from what the same holy father (*ibid. p. 581*) adds: 'Mary was admonished by the angel: thou must not think to have to bring forth a son for thyself; but as soon as He is born, call Him Redeemer; because thy virginity does not produce a son to thee, but it produces the pledge of the author, and thy integrity carries a master, not a subject; the angel saying, "And thou shalt call His name Jesus, that is, Redeemer."' Thus our Blessed Lady, by uniting her spontaneous sacrifice for our sake to the equally spontaneous sacrifice of the Son of God, co-operated and contributed with our Blessed Saviour to the spiritual restoration of mankind; and for it she is surely entitled to the particular gratitude and love of all Christianity.

2. *From the Early Fathers of the Church, as Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

Mary's influence in the work of redemption, and in the welfare of mankind, clearly appears from the testimonies of the holy fathers.

St. Irenæus (cont. Hæres. lib. iii. c. xxxiii.) asks: 'What is the cause of the mystery of the Incarnation not being accomplished without Mary's consent?' and answers: 'Because it was God's wish that Mary should be a partaker of all good.' That is, that Mary through her free will should concur in our redemption, which was the cause of all good derived through her to us; and by doing so, as the same holy father adds, 'she became the cause of salvation to all mankind.'

Tertullian (Lib. de Carn. Chr.) says: 'Eve believed the serpent, Mary believed Gabriel; those evils which the former caused by believing, the latter likewise repaired by believing.'

St. Ephrem (Rhythm. xii. Morris, p. 54) makes Mary exclaim as follows: 'O chaste women, long for my Well-beloved, that He may dwell in you; and ye also impure, that He may hallow you. Ye churches also, that the Son of the Creator, Who came to renew all creatures, may adorn you!'

St. James of Nisibis (Ser. p. 273), says: 'For woman's sake the ground was cursed to bring forth thorns and briars; but after Blessed Mary came, the thorns were pulled out, and labour was taken away.'

St. Ambrose (Ep. xlix. tom. iii. p. 1154, edit. Migne) says: 'Mary was alone when the angel spoke to her, and the Holy Ghost came upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her. She was alone, and operated the salvation of the world, and conceived the redemption of all.'

St. Jerome (Ep. xlviii. Oper. t. i. p. 510, edit. Migne) says: 'Christ virgin, Mary virgin; they were the foundation of virginity to both sexes. The Apostles were either virgin, or abstaining from their wives. Bishops, priests, deacons, are elected virgin or widower, and certainly after being made priests, they must be eternally chaste.' And the same (adv. Jovin. Oper. tom. ii. p. 254, Migne) says: 'This perpetual Virgin is the mother of a great many virgins.'

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Catech. Lect. Newman, p. 140) says: 'Adored be the Lord the Virgin-born, and let the virgins understand what is the crown of their condition. Also let the solitaries understand the renown of chastity; for we too are allowed the same dignity. . . . Let us not be ignorant of the glory of chastity; for its crown is angelic, and its perfection superhuman. Angels on earth are they who follow chastity; the virgins have part with Mary the Virgin.' And St. Augustine (Serm. cxx. p. 1985, Oper. t. v. p. 2, Migne) says: 'The mother of our race brought pain into the world; the Mother of our God brought salvation both to men and women.' And the same holy father (Serm. cxci. § 4) says: 'From Mary's unspoiled virginity holy nuns were born; you

FIG. 26.



who despising this world's marriage, have chosen to be virgins even in your flesh, celebrate with solemn joy the birth from a Virgin this day. He who brought you that which you were to love, did not take away from His Mother that which you love. She, then, whose footsteps you are following, abode not with any man in order to conceive, and when she was bearing the child, remained a virgin. Imitate her as much as you can.'

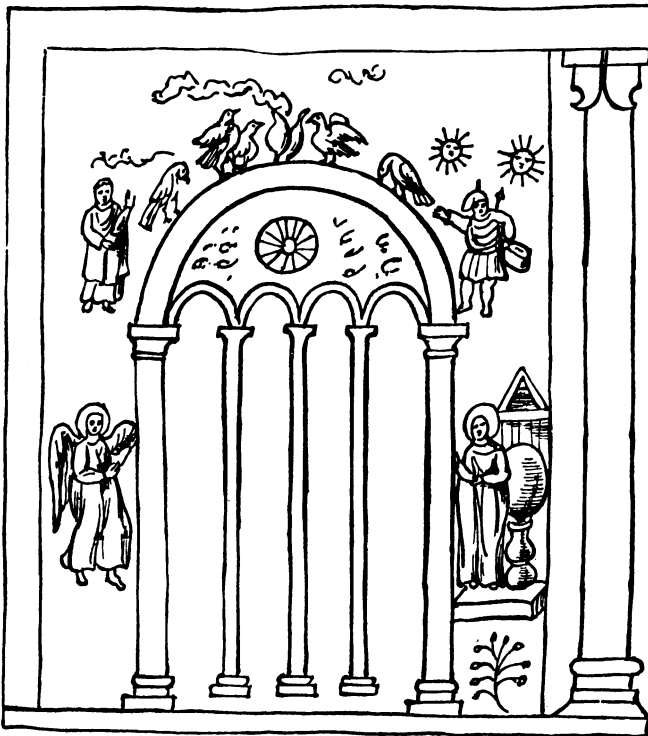
Now, if Mary had only been the physical instrument of our Lord's taking flesh in her womb, even for this alone she would have been entitled to all honour and veneration on the part of all Christians, insomuch as through her they have received our Blessed and Divine Redeemer. But how far greater must be our veneration—nay, I must say, our most

ardent love—towards her, when we remember that, through her virtues and love for us, she has been actually an active and influential element in the restoration of our fallen nature, and of our right to everlasting happiness!

3. *From Christian Archæology.*

By fig. 26 we exhibit the embassy sent by the Holy Trinity to Mary, taken from a sarcophagus excavated near

FIG. 27.



the church of St. Sebastian of Rome, and mentioned by Bianchini (tav. 2, § 1).

The fig. 27 is taken from the work of Agincourt (tomo vi. tav. 27), and belongs to the sixth century.

The fig. 28 is taken from the Cemetery of Priscilla, and is

FIG. 28.



exhibited by Bosio (Roma Sotterranea, lib. iii. cap. xli.), and by Arringhi also (lib. iv. cap. xxx.). In the middle is to be seen St. Priscilla, the foundress of the cemetery. At the right there is a prelate, who, assisted by a minister, gives the sacred veil to a virgin; at the left is the Blessed Virgin with her Divine Son in her arms. The painting belongs to the second century, and from this it appears how the ancient Christians, since the time of the Apostles, following the example of the Mother of God, made vows of chastity. It is worthy of remark, that in the said monument, Mary is made spectatrix of a virginal consecration, as it were, to show that it was through her that the vow of virginity was introduced into the world.

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## SECTION II.

### PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

BISHOP BULL, 'On the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin' (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 265), says: 'The Blessed Virgin Mary was the only woman who took off the stain and dishonour of her sex, by being the instrument which brought that into the world which should repair and make amends for the loss and damage brought to mankind by the transgression of the first woman, Eve. By a woman as the principal cause we were first undone; and by a woman as an instrument under God, a Saviour and Redeemer is born to us, and the Blessed Virgin is that woman.'

Dr. Hickes, 'On the due Praise and Honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary' (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 292), says: 'If the names of other saints are distinguished in miniature, hers ought to shine with gold, especially if we consider that she, of all the daughters of Israel, had the honour to be chosen by the Holy Trinity for the Mother of God. What shall be done to the woman whom the King of kings delighteth to honour? Certainly, if we were to hold our peace, and refuse to praise her among women, the very stones of the church would cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber would answer it. If what the



woman did, who poured forth a box of precious ointment upon the head of our Saviour, was to be spoken of as a memorial of her wheresoever the Gospel was preached throughout the whole world, surely that Most Blessed Virgin, who had the honour to bring forth and educate the Son of God, ought to have a festival, and be mentioned with all due reverence and esteem, in all the churches of the saints.'

Mrs. Jameson (Introduction, p. xx.), says: 'With Christianity, new ideas of the moral and religious responsibility of woman entered the world. . . . We are to suppose that for the exaltation of the male sex, Christ appeared on earth as a man; and for the consolation of womankind, He was born of a woman only, as if it had been said: From henceforth no creature shall be base before God, unless perverted by depravity (Augustine, Oper. Supl. 238, Serm. lxiii.). Such is the reasoning of St. Augustine, who, I must observe, had an especial veneration for his mother Monica, and he is desirous to prove that through the Virgin Mary all womankind were henceforth elevated in the scale of being. And this was the idea entertained of her subsequently.' 'Ennobler of thy nature,' says Dante, apostrophising her as if her perfections had ennobled not merely her own sex, but the whole human race: 'Tu sei colei che l'umana natura nobilitasti.'

On consideration of the whole that has been said in this chapter in reference to our Blessed Lady, we ought to conclude with Dr. Hickes, 'if we were to hold our peace, and refuse to praise her among women, the stones of the church would cry out—"The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it."'

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN, BY CONSENTING TO THE HOLY TRINITY'S EMBASSY, BECAME THE TRUE MOTHER OF GOD, AN OBJECT OF VENERATION AND CONFIDENCE TO ALL GENERATIONS.

### SECTION I.

#### CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

##### 1. *From Holy Scripture.*

IN the first chapter of this work has been shown, that in consequence of the fall of our progenitors, Mary was appointed by the Holy Trinity to be the mother of the coming Redeemer of fallen man. In the present chapter, we proceed to show the grounds upon which stands Mary's divine maternity. The first who impiously began to preach publicly against Mary's divine maternity, was Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople. His heresy consisted principally in saying that the union of both the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ was not accomplished in His divine person, but that Jesus Christ was a created person, to whom the divine person was united, not by a *substantial*, but only by a *moral* or *accidental* union. From that heretical principle, among other abominable errors, the following was also derived; viz. that the Blessed Virgin Mary was not, and could not be called, *Theotokos*, that is, *Mother of God*, but only *Christotokos*, that is, *Mother of Christ*. The Catholic doctrine, therefore, on so vital an article of faith, is this: that in Jesus Christ there cannot be admitted two persons, the one divine, the other human; but only one person, a divine person subsisting in two natures; viz. the divine and the human, by the

former of which He is God, equal to His Father, whilst by the latter, which He took from the substance of the Blessed Virgin Mary, He is inferior to His Father. However, the terminus of the human generation of Jesus Christ being the divine Person, Mary, who is the Mother of Jesus Christ, is truly and properly the Mother of God. As soon as the Holy Virgin gave her consent to the angel to be the Mother of the Son of God, the Holy Ghost from her pure virginal blood formed in her womb a perfect body, which was endowed with a perfect soul, and both His soul and body were at the same instant assumed by the divine Word, and from that very moment the Son of God became also man, like the rest of men, as is evident from the Scriptures. St. John says (i.), 'The Word was made flesh;' St. Luke (i. 31) relates that the angel said to Mary, 'Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son.' St. Paul, writing to the Christians of Galatia, says (iv. 4): 'When the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son made of a woman.' From these texts it appears that the Son of God was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. But as it is correlative to say the Son of God is born of Mary, and Mary is the Mother of the Son of God, it follows that as the Son of God is acknowledged to be the Son of Mary, in like manner Mary must be acknowledged to be the Mother of the Son of God, and consequently, Mother of God. Indeed, that Jesus Christ had a true human body, appears from His growing, His being subject to hunger and thirst, His eating and drinking, His walking, labouring, sleeping, suffering, shedding His blood, and dying like other men. Likewise that Jesus Christ had a human soul created and infused into His body by an act of divine power, appears, 1st, because the soul, and not the body, is the principal part of man; 2ndly, because a human body without a soul is not a human being; 3rdly, if Christ had not a human soul, but was merely God dwelling in a human body, He would not have been a true man; and 4thly, because from the Scriptures it is evident that He had a soul like ours, as He said, 'My soul is troubled' (John xii. 27). And the same Evangelist (xiii. 21), adds: 'When Jesus Christ had thus said, He was troubled in spirit,' And St.

Matthew (xxvi. 30) says: 'Then said He unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death.' Therefore, Jesus Christ was in all respects a perfect human being, possessing both a human soul and body, having all the attributes of a perfect man, like any other man, except in respect to sin, and what may be termed the degradation of a man. Consequently, the ever-Virgin Mary was the Mother of a true and perfect man, who at the same time was true and perfect God. The assumption, then, of the human nature, body and soul, by the Second Person of the Holy Trinity in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, constitutes the mystery of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, as well as the divine maternity of the Virgin Mary.

2. *From the Doctrine of the Early Fathers, the Symbols of Faith, the Ecumenical Synods, and the Practice of the Church.*

Since the holy fathers are the witnesses of the biblical and traditional doctrine, let us consult them as evidence of the divine maternity of Mary.

St. Justin the Martyr, in the second century, in his Dialogue with Tryphon (100), says: 'We know that He, before all creatures, proceeded from the Father, by His power and will . . . and by means of the Virgin became man;' by which words it is clear that Justin taught as certain, that the same Christ, who from eternity was the Son of God, was born in time of the Virgin Mary, who, in consequence, is the Mother of God.

Tertullian (de Præscrip. adv. Hæret. § xiii.) says: 'The rule of faith, which teaches us what we are to defend and maintain, is . . . that the Word spake by the prophets, and was afterwards carried by the Spirit and power of God the Father into the Virgin Mary; was in her womb made flesh, and was born of her in the person of Jesus Christ.'

St. Dionysius of Alexandria, who lived in the third century, in his letter to Paul of Samosata, questions him, saying, 'Since one sole Virgin, daughter of life, generated the living Word out of her *substance*, how can you say that Christ is a chosen man, and not really God adored by all creatures

with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and born of the Holy Virgin and God-bearing Mary ?’

St. Ephrem (Select Works, Morris, Oxford, 1847, p. 36) says : ‘ Rachel cried to her husband and said : give me sons. Blessed be Mary, in whose womb, though she asked not, Thou didst dwell holily as a Gift, that poured itself upon them that received it. Hannah with bitter tears asked a child ; Sarah and Rebecca with vows, Elizabeth also with her prayer, after having harassed themselves for a long time, obtained comfort. Blessed be Mary, who without vows and without prayer, in her virginity conceived and brought forth the Lord.’

To the above fathers, who were anterior to Nestorius, we will add the fathers who were contemporary with him.

St. Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. li.) says : ‘ Any one who does not believe that Mary is the Mother of God, is out of divinity ;’ that is, he is a heretic.

Theodoret (lib. iv. de Hær. c. xii. t. iv. p. 245) says : ‘ The most ancient preachers of the Catholic faith by apostolical tradition thought that the mother of the Saviour ought to be called and venerated as mother of God.’

St. Cyril (Ep. ad Successum) says : ‘ As the Blessed Virgin brought forth God made man and incarnate, so we call her Mother of God ; because the Word of God the Father was not a different God from the Son born of the Holy Virgin, but the same who is before all centuries born of the woman according to the flesh.’ And the same holy father (Ep. ad Acacium) says : ‘ I think there is not one among all the orthodox, who hesitates to call Mary by the name of Mother of God, as it is certain that Immanuel is God.’ And again (Lib. de Fide ad Vig.) he adds : ‘ I thought it right to show that this word *Deipara* (Mother of God) was familiar to all the ancient fathers, I mean throughout the world.’ And after saying so, he brings forward the testimonies of the aforesaid fathers, and among them that of Bishop Theophilus, who says : ‘ This one fact I will not omit to mention, viz. that all good and learned fathers, who have existed before us, called the Virgin *Deipara*.’ Now, if none of the orthodox denied to Mary the title of Mother of God ; if all the fathers

without exception, anterior to the time of Nestorius, styled Mary, Mother of God, it follows that a perpetual tradition had existed coming down from the time of the Apostles, with regard to Mary's divine maternity. This was so true, that the impious Julian the Apostate, knowing that the Christians acknowledged the Virgin as the true Mother of God, derided them, saying, 'You do not cease to call Mary *theotokos*, Mother of God.' (Cyril, *Opp. t. vi. p. 262.*)

But in order that more light may be added to the truth we defend, we now proceed to examine what is said in the Symbols of Faith, as well as in the œcumenical councils, regarding Mary's maternity. Because, if the Symbols of Faith teach that Mary is the Mother of God, this will show that such she was believed to be always and by all persons. Besides, the Symbols of Faith showing what all Catholics believe in their hearts, and profess by their mouths, it follows that things comprised in the Symbols, have been retained and professed as matters of faith by all the faithful. In like manner the councils, laying their foundations both on the authority of Holy Writ, and on the tradition of the holy fathers, by quoting the testimonies of the œcumenical councils, the sense of the Holy Scripture, as well as the mind of the fathers upon the matter in question, is also shown. Now, in the Symbols of the Apostles it is said: 'I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.' Hence, according to this symbol, the same Christ Jesus, Son of God, was born of the Virgin Mary, and consequently all the faithful, from the time of the Apostles, professed that Mary was the Mother of God. In the Symbol composed in the First General Council of Nice, in the year 325, after saying that Jesus Christ is God of God, Light of light, and consubstantial with His Father, it is added: 'Who for us men, and for our salvation, descended from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and became man.' Hence, the same divine person is the Son of God, and the Son of Mary. The same truth is proved by the First Council of Constantinople, in which the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin was maintained, and in which was declared 'an anathema to all who would

not confess that there are two nativities in the Divine Word : one before all centuries from the Eternal Father, the other in time of the glorious Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary.' Lastly, we give the testimony of the Council of Ephesus, in which this dogma has been defined, against the impiety of Nestorius, and in which the anathemas of St. Cyril were approved, the first of which is as follows: 'Whoever does not confess Immanuel to be true God, and consequently Mary to be the Mother of God (as she brought forth the Incarnate Word of God according to the flesh), let him be anathema.' And the same was also defined by the Council of Chalcedon, and by the Second Council of Constantinople.

Indeed, that until the time of Nestorius this truth had been acknowledged and professed by all Christians of Constantinople, appears from the fact that as soon as the people of that metropolis heard it stated in a public sermon that the Blessed Virgin Mary was not the Mother of God, they immediately arose against it, hastened out, and leaving the church, profaned by such a blasphemy, unanimously exclaimed that such a doctrine was *quite new*, and had never been heard before. From this fact it is clear that a constant tradition must have taught them Mary's divine maternity. Besides, as the Church of Constantinople at that time was united with all the other churches of Christianity, it appears that the belief of the Catholic Church in reference to Mary's divine maternity was the same throughout the world. It is not our intention in the present work to make any allusion to the miracles wrought by God in support of the dignity of Mary (except the one wrought at the nuptial feast in Cana), yet we cannot help observing with ecclesiastical historians of the time of Nestorius, that the tongue of the heretic, which had uttered such blasphemy against the Mother of God, actually rotted in his mouth. How consoling is it then for a Catholic of the nineteenth century to see that the veneration and confidence he professes towards the Mother of God is not a new conception of some pious souls, or a fabrication of any particular school of the last centuries, but, on the contrary, is as old as the Catholic Church, and is of the same school as that of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, from which

both the Latin and the Greek Churches, both the people of Rome, and the people of Constantinople, had learnt it! For this reason the creed of England, of Germany, of America, of the entire world, ought to be the same as the creed of the Catholics of Rome, and of those of Constantinople of the fifth century of Christianity. If the present creed of a nation is different from the old creed of Constantinople and the present creed of Rome, the creed of such a nation is not a Catholic creed. For it is always to be remembered, that in theology there is an axiom of the holy fathers, which cannot be disregarded without falling into error. This axiom says, 'Id verius quod prius, id falsum quod posterius immissum;' viz., 'What is anterior is true, what is posterior is false.' It was according to this axiom that Pope St. Stephen, having before his eyes the ancient tradition of the Church with regard to the validity of the baptism conferred by those who are outside of the Church, wrote to St. Cyprian, 'Nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est.' Tradition is to be kept, and therefore no novelty is to be admitted. This is an infallible rule to be invariably observed, in order to be able to distinguish truth from falsehood. Since, then, there is nothing said at present by the Catholic Church to honour and venerate the glorious Virgin Mary, that is not substantially justified by the immemorial usages of the Church of Christ, so the Christians of the present age must also have the same veneration and confidence in the Mother of God, as the Christians of Constantinople and the rest of the Catholic Church had at that time. Consequently any nation, or part of a nation, which at this present time does not acknowledge in Mary her divine maternity and all other inherent qualifications, but brings her down to the level of an ordinary woman, can no longer be called Catholic, having miserably departed from venerable antiquity.

But from the tradition of the fathers, the Symbols of Faith, and the authority of the œcumenical synods, let us pass to the practice of the universal Church with regard to the worship of Mary as the Mother of God; and first, let us consult the Liturgy of the Mass, both in the Eastern and Western Churches. With regard to the former, in the litur-



gies called that of St. James, of St. Basil, of the Copts-Jacobites, of St. John Chrysostome, and of the Armenian Church, we find the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin equally professed; nay, in a very ancient fragment of the Gospel of St. John, in Coptic, published by Father Giorgi as belonging to the fourth century, our Blessed Lady is called *Deipara*. Therefore the title of Mother of God was given to Mary, in Christianity, long before such an appellation had been sanctioned by the Council of Ephesus. The same glorious title to Mary is also frequently found in St. Athanasius, in Eusebius, in St. Alexander, predecessor of St. Athanasius; in St. Methodius, in Denis of Alexandria, and St. Hypolitus. Origen also spoke of it, and ascribed its origin to the inspired word of St. Elizabeth. In reference to the western liturgies, the same commemoration of Mary as the Mother of God is found. So it is in the sacramentaries of St. Leo, St. Gelasius, and St. Gregory. The same title is given to Mary in the liturgy called that of St. Ambrose, and in the liturgies of France, Germany, and the English Churches. We abstain here from quoting any of the passages of the said liturgies, as they may be seen in the second chapter of this work.

In addition to the title of Mother of God, Holy Church has ever used from antiquity, and given to the Blessed Virgin, other honourable and distinguished titles. Hence, according to tradition, Mary being acknowledged far more innocent and unspotted than all other virgins, is called Queen of Virgins (*Regina Virginum*). She being also judged to have a faith more shining and perfect than that of the patriarchs and prophets, is called Queen of Patriarchs (*Regina Patriarcharum*) and Queen of Prophets (*Regina Prophetarum*). The zeal of Mary being more ardent than that of the Apostles, she is called Queen of the Apostles (*Regina Apostolorum*). The fortitude of Mary in her sufferings being superior to that of the martyrs, she is styled Queen of Martyrs (*Regina Martyrum*). The purity and love of Mary being found distinguished and privileged above that of the angels, she is called Queen of Angels (*Regina Angelorum*). All forms of sanctity being comprised in Mary, she is, as it were, the ocean

of all created sanctity, and is therefore called Queen of all Saints (*Regina Sanctorum omnium*). Besides, the Church, on account of the grace communicated to Mary by the Holy Trinity, venerates her as *Mother of Divine Grace, Mother most pure, most chaste, undefiled, untouched, admirable; Mother the most renowned, most perfect, most powerful, most merciful, most faithful*. Moreover, she is styled, *Mirror of Justice, the Seat of Wisdom, the Cause of our Joy, the Spiritual Vessel, Vessel of Honour, the Illustrious Vessel of Devotion, the Mystical Rose, the Tower of David, the Tower of Ivory, the House of Gold, the Ark of the Covenant, the Gate of Heaven, the Morning Star, the Health of the Weak, the Refuge of Sinners, the Comforter of the Afflicted, the Help of Christians*. All these different forms of addressing the Blessed Virgin Mary are found in the Litany which is generally sung by the faithful in all the Catholic churches. Bishop Bull, 'Of the Invocation' (Catholic Safeguards, t. ii. p. 273), says that the 'Litany of our Lady . . . is too big for any creature.' We ask him respectfully to tell us which is bigger,—all the Litany, or the few words of the angel, 'Hail, full of grace'? All the Litany, or the name of 'Mother of God'? We think that if all the Litany were put in one side of the balance, and in the other side the just-mentioned words, they would be found much heavier than all the Litany. The same adds (*loc. cit.*): 'We dare not call her Queen of Heaven, Queen of Angels, Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles,' &c. But we ask, What is greater, to be called Queen of Heaven, of Angels, of Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, &c., or to be called, and be really Mother of God, full of grace? Had Bishop Bull better considered the qualifications inherent to the dignity of Mother of God, we think he would have said that the Litany, far from being too big, is rather insufficient to express the meaning of *full of grace* and *Mother of God*.

A prayer also of more general use in the Church is the *Ave Maria*. The grandeur of it is evident when the elements of which it is composed are considered, being, as regards the first part, composed of the words of the angel Gabriel; next, of the words of St. Elizabeth; the remainder being added by the Church. By this prayer the faithful address them-

selves to Mary in the following terms: 'Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.'

Next to it come the antiphons proper for the different seasons of the year; which are as follows. From the first Sunday of Advent till the Purification:—

Mother of Jesus, Heaven's open gate,  
Star of the Sea, support the falling state  
Of mortals; thou whose womb thy Maker bore,  
And yet, strange thing, a virgin as before:  
Who didst from Gabriel's *hail* this news receive,  
Repenting sinners by thy prayers relieve.

From the Purification till Maundy Thursday:—

Hail, Mary, Queen of heavenly spheres;  
Hail, whom the angelic host reveres;  
Hail, fruitful root; hail, sacred gate,  
Whence the world's Light derives its date.

O glorious maid, with beauty blest,  
May joys eternal fill thy breast!  
Thus crowned with glory and with joy,  
Thy prayers with Christ for us employ.

From Holy Saturday till Trinity Eve:—

Triumph, O Queen of Heaven, to see—Alleluia  
The sacred Infant born of thee—Alleluia  
Return in glory from the tomb—Alleluia;  
And with thy prayers prevent our doom—Alleluia.

From Trinity Eve till Advent:—

Hail, happy Queen, thou mercy's parent, hail!  
Life, hope and comfort of this earthly vale,  
To thee do we, Eve's wretched children, cry;  
In sighs and tears to thee we suppliants fly.  
Rise, glorious advocate, exert thy love and mother's care,  
And let our vows those eyes of pity move.  
O sweet, O pious maid! for us obtain,  
For us who long have in our exile lain,  
To see thy Infant Jesus, and with Him to reign.

Lastly is used in the Church the hymn—

HAIL, STAR OF THE SEA.  
Hail, Queen of Heaven, the Ocean Star,  
Guide of the wanderer here below;

Thrown on life's surge, we claim thy care,  
Save us from peril and from woe.  
Mother of Christ, Star of the Sea,  
Pray for the wanderer, pray for me.

O pious, chaste, and spotless maid,  
We sinners make our prayers through thee;  
Remind thy Son that He has paid  
The price of our iniquity:  
Virgin most pure, Star of the Sea,  
Pray for the sinner, pray for me.

Sojourners in this vale of tears,  
To thee, blest advocate, we cry;  
Pity our sorrows, calm our fears,  
And soothe with hope our misery.  
Refuge in grief, Star of the Sea,  
Pray for the mourner, pray for me.

And while to Him who reigns above,  
In Godhead one, in Persons three,  
The source of life, of grace, of love,  
Homage we pay on bended knee.  
Queen of Heaven, Star of the Sea,  
Pray for thy children, pray for me.

How beautiful are all these prayers! How they show the veneration, love, and confidence of the Christians towards their spiritual mother! We see in them a daughter who speaks with her beloved mother; one heart bent to another.

### *3. From Christian Archæology.*

A new proof and a striking one, of the veneration and trust placed by the primitive Christians in the Blessed Mother of God, is taken from Christian archæology, particularly from such ancient monuments as are found in the Roman hypogees. Therefore we exhibit under fig. 29 the etching of the Blessed Virgin holding her Divine Infant, as it was found in the subterranean necropolis of Rome, and published by Felice Randanini, and Arringhi in his work '*Roma Sotterranea*,' (lib. v. cap. vii. p. 470), who, while exhibiting the said monument, says, 'It was not only in the Christian hypogees that the image of the Mother of God holding her Divine Son is found; but this mystery is to be seen repeatedly also in the

sealing rings, as appears from the ancient ring which we illustrate, and which was made of tin by a rough hand, of the golden centuries of Christianity.'

FIG. 29.



By the fig. 30, we exhibit a fresco of the Blessed Virgin with her Divine Child, as taken by Arringhi in the last-named work (tom. ii. lib. iv. cap. xxxvii. p. 304). This fresco was found in the Cemetery of Priscilla, Via Salaria, and therefore it is to be considered a most eminent classical monument as the frescoes of that cemetery belong to the best period of the arts in Christian times.

By fig. 31, we exhibit a picture of the Blessed Virgin with her Divine Infant, referred to by Bianchini in his work

FIG. 30.



(tab. i. sæculi i.). This picture is in the Liberian basilica at Rome, and if we are to believe Theodosius Lector, a writer of the sixth century, such an image was sent by Eudoxia

from Jerusalem to Pulcheria, as a painting made by St. Luke, though probably it was not painted by the Evangelist, but by another ancient holy man, named Luke. At all events, the painting is very old.

By fig. 32, we exhibit a painting representing our divine Saviour, the Blessed Virgin and St. Smaragdus, found in the cemetery of the city of Albano, near Rome, and preserved by Boldetti in his work, '*Osservazioni sopra i Cimiteri Antichi*' (lib. ii. cap. xviii. p. 558). It is to be observed that upon the head of the Blessed Virgin there is the inscription MITERTCV, that is, 'Mother of God.'

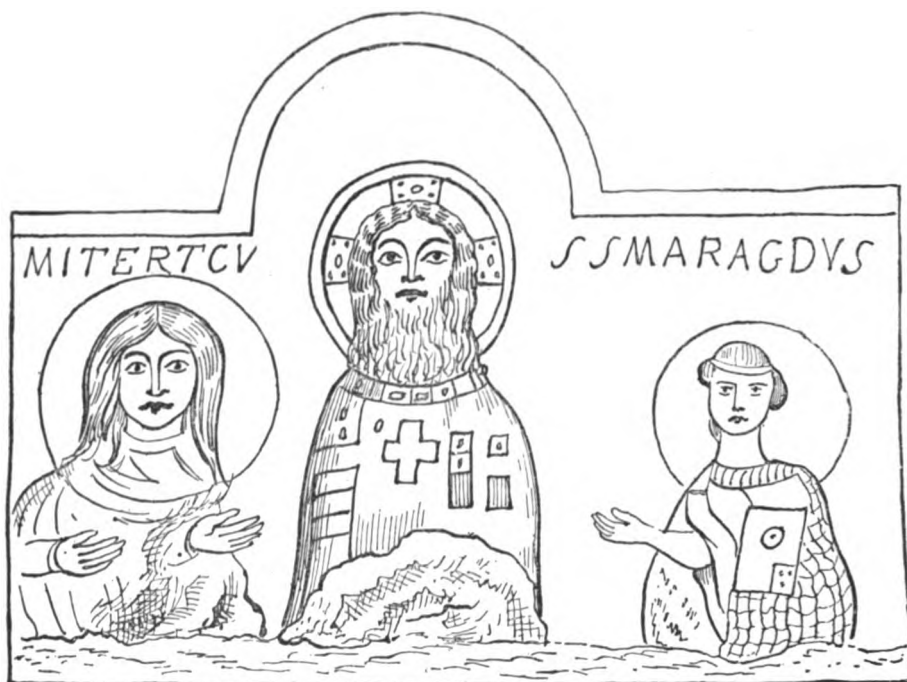
FIG. 31.



We could here bring a long catalogue of churches, named by Boldetti as erected in honour of the Mother of God from the very beginning of Christianity. But as we do not know how far we might be able to rely on the authority of the historians brought forward as evidence, we deem it better not to name them, being content with mentioning only that of St. Maria in Trastevere, in Rome, which in its primitive form is affirmed by all historians to be one of the earliest Christian antiquities. It is worthy of remark that this ancient church was dedicated to God in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, so that this is a new evidence that the devotion of the Romans to the Mother of God was coeval with the introduction of Christianity and the establishment of the

Apostolic See in Rome. Agincourt, in his work (vol. vi.), relates that this place being given up to the Christians before the time of religious freedom, they assembled there clandestinely. He adds that afterwards, the publicans having dis-

FIG. 32.



puted this asylum with the Christians, it was referred to the adjudication of the Emperor Alexander Severus, who decided in favour of the Christians, saying, as it is related by Lampridius (in Alexand. Sever.), that whosoever was the new God they adored, he preferred to give the place to the Christians, rather than give it to such a people as were the publicans.

## SECTION II.

### PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

IN the English 'Book of Common Prayer,' according to the rites and ceremonies of the United Church of England and Ireland, in the prayer for Christmas Day, the mystery of the Incarnation of our Saviour, and the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin, are professed. The collect is thus given: 'Almighty God, who hast given us Thy only begotten Son to take our nature upon Him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin; grant that we being regenerate and made Thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by the Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.'

Also, in the second of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Protestant Church, the Divine maternity as well as the virginity of our Blessed Lady is professed as follows: 'The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very man.'

Dr. Pearson, Bishop of Chester, 'On the Creed' (London, 1602, p. 177), says: 'We must acknowledge first a true, real, and proper conception, by which the Virgin did conceive of her own substance the true and the real substance of our Saviour, according to the prediction of the prophet, *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive*, and the annunciation of the angel, *Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb*. From whence our Saviour is expressly termed by Elizabeth, "the fruit of her womb." Secondly, as she did at first really and properly conceive, so did she also nourish and increase the same body of our Saviour, once conceived by the true substance of her own, by which she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.



And she is described as going with Joseph to be taxed, "being great with child," and pronounced happy by that loud cry of the woman, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee." Thirdly, when Christ was thus conceived and grew in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, she truly and really did bring forth her Son by a true and proper parturition, and Christ thereby was properly born by a true nativity. Wherefore, from these three—a true conception, nutrition, and parturition—we must acknowledge that the Blessed Virgin was truly and properly the Mother of our Saviour, and *Deipara*.'

Bishop Bull, 'On the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin' (Serm. iv. No. 3; Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 266), says: 'The Blessed Virgin was consecrated to be a temple of the Divinity in a singular manner. For the Eternal Son of God, by an ineffable conjunction, united Himself with human nature, which was miraculously conceived and formed in her, so He that was born of her, was God and man. Oh astonishing condescension of the Son of God! Oh wonderful advancement of the Blessed Virgin! . . . Upon which account the Fathers of the Third General Council at Ephesus, convened against Nestorius, approved the title of *Theotokos*, Mother of God, given to the Blessed Virgin. They approved it, I say; they did not first invent it, as some have ignorantly affirmed; and therefore they themselves in their synodical epistle say that the holy fathers before them undoubtedly called the Blessed Virgin *Deiparam*, the Mother of God. Indeed, a whole age before that council, we find Eusebius expressly giving that title to the sacred Virgin, in his third book of the Life of Constantine (chap. xlii.). And Socrates, a most credible witness in this matter, in the seventh book of his Ecclesiastical History (chap. xxxii.), assures us that Origen, long before Eusebius, largely explained and asserted that title as applied to the Blessed Virgin. And to go yet higher, we have heard Irenæus, who was pupil to a pupil of the Apostles, magnifying the Virgin upon this account that she did bear God with her. If she did *portare Deum*, she did *parere Deum*: if she bore God, she brought Him forth too; and so was *Theotokos*, the Mother of Him that was God. Nay, the blessed martyr and disciple

of the Apostles, Ignatius, in his Epistle to the Ephesians (edit. Vos., p. 7) feared not to say: "Our God Jesus Christ was conceived of Mary." But need we search after human authorities, when the inspired Elizabeth, in her divine rapture, plainly gives the Blessed Virgin the same title?'

Thus the divine maternity of Mary is fully vindicated, not only by all Catholic, scriptural, traditional, historical, and archæological monuments, but also by the evidence of the Anglican Established Church, and of Protestant churchmen. What therefore remains, but to conclude with Bishop Pearson ('On the Creed,' Art. III. p. 178, London, 1692), that every Christian ought 'to preserve an esteem of her person proportionable to so a high a dignity.'

## CHAPTER IX.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, ON ACCOUNT OF THE *GRATUITOUS GRACES* CONFERRED UPON HER BY THE HOLY TRINITY BECAME THE *WORTHY* MOTHER OF GOD, AND AN OBJECT OF VENERATION AND CONFIDENCE.

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SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From Holy Scripture.*

As in the preceding chapter it has been proved that Mary is the true Mother of God, so in the present we proceed to show that she is moreover the *worthy* Mother of God. Mary was already great on account of her descent from patriarchs, kings, and pontiffs. However, this being only a human grandeur, it did not constitute her true greatness. She was especially great for her supernatural endowments, for the graces she received from the Holy Trinity to become the worthy Mother of the Son of God. To proceed with order and clearness, the nature and especial quality of the graces conferred upon her shall be here explained. Grace in the present dispensation is a gratuitous gift of God to men, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, relative to eternal life. There are several species of graces, and among them the graces called *gratis datæ* (gratuitous graces), which are given to a soul particularly for the benefit of others, to promote their spiritual welfare, their conversion, their sanctification, their salvation. Next follows the *gratia sanctificans* (sanctifying grace), which is given to a soul especially for its spiritual advantage, in order to render it pleasing and

acceptable to God, and to enable it to unite itself more intimately to Him. Mary, being pre-eminently endowed with these two kinds of graces, was therefore exalted above all creatures, not only by eminence of dignity, but also in sublimity of sanctity; and it was in respect of these graces that she became the worthy Mother of God.

The second kind of grace will form the subject of a subsequent chapter; in the present we shall confine ourselves to her *gratuitous graces*, and proceed to demonstrate that our Blessed Lady was endowed with as many gratuitous graces as were required to make her the *worthy* Mother of God. To render this important truth as clear as possible, we shall bring forward an incontrovertible principle established by St. Thomas, adopted by all theologians, and already alluded to in the sixth chapter of this work; namely, that in the order of Divine Providence, every person receives from God such a number and weight of graces, as the state and dignity to which he has been called by God, requires (St. Th. p. iii. q. 27, art. 5), *unicuique a Deo datur secundum hoc ad quod eligitur*. This order of Providence is conformable to the wisdom, bounty, and power of God, who in the economy of election and predestination, according to His good will, gives to such as are chosen to some particular state, or dignity, all those means which He knows and foresees to be convenient and necessary for them in the due discharge of the duties of the state which they embrace in accordance with the Divine Will. For great designs God provides suitable agents.

The Holy Scriptures furnish us with many instances of such a disposition of Providence. Moses had been elected to be the leader of the people of God, and as such, in order to succeed well in his charge, God made him acquainted with the different sciences of Egypt, and endowed him with the bright light of faith, by which he was enabled to despise the earthly offers of Pharaoh's house, and become powerful in his words and deeds. Samuel likewise, being elected to the office of judge of His people, is preordained by being dedicated from his childhood to the service of the Temple, and illuminated with the knowledge of the divine revelations. Gideon, being elected to rescue the people from the yoke of

the Madianites, is rendered fully qualified for that purpose. Sampson being chosen to deliver the same people from the slavery of the Philistines, to that end is endowed with such strength and courage as were necessary for that arduous undertaking. To meet the scope of their respective missions, other similarly distinguished men were endowed with suitable qualifications. So Solomon is made the most learned and the richest king in the world; Jonas received the grace to obtain the conversion of the Ninevites; to Esdras was given the grace to make the people return to the observance of the law of God. Sixteen prophets, having received from God the extraordinary graces required for their mission, were successively sent among the people, and admirably fulfilled the end of their mission. The Baptist, also, being elected to be the precursor of the Messiah, is sanctified in his mother's womb, is trained to the privations of the desert, and prevented by singular Divine grace.

Now, our Blessed Lady had been predestined by the Holy Trinity to the most elevated office and the most sublime dignity to which a pure creature could be raised, as no higher office nor more exalted dignity can be found than that of Mother of God. Consequently she received from the Holy Trinity such an amount of graces and high qualifications as were necessary and suitable to her, in order to become the worthy Mother of the Eternal Word. As her dignity surpassed the dignity of all created beings, so her graces were of an order and number superior to that of any one else: very much superior to the graces and gifts given to Moses, to Samuel, to Gideon, to Sampson, to Solomon, to Jonah, to Esdras, to the Prophets, to the Baptist, &c.; nay, superior to the graces given to all the rest of such personages and holy souls, as in all ages of the world had appeared, and were the most favoured servants of God. Hence the same Angelic doctor (p. iii. q. 27, art. 4) says that 'the Blessed Virgin being divinely elected to be the Mother of God, there is no doubt that God through His grace made her fit for it.' Of course, Mary, since she was a finite being, could not as such be capable of what is immense and infinite; however, she was made capable of an unlimited amount of graces by a

supernatural power to operate supernaturally, conformably to the doctrine of the same Angelic doctor (p. i. q. 12, art. 5), who says: 'Whatever is raised to a position above its own nature, must necessarily be qualified for it by a disposition over its nature, that is, by a superadded supernatural disposition, by which it might be elevated to such a sublimity.' So, to form in ourselves supernatural acts of faith, hope, and charity, the supernatural aid of grace is necessary to enable our natural power to operate supernaturally. Now, though Mary, on account of her human nature, was finite, and consequently could not bear such an amount of graces as were required to qualify her to be the worthy Mother of God; yet we must admit that she had been supernaturally prepared and disposed for it by the Holy Ghost. Indeed, Mary, if we only consider her limited human nature, was incapable of generating the Son of God, this being an operation of Divine nature; nevertheless, she did so by supernatural power. So, although she was unfit by herself (that is, in consideration of her limited power) to become the worthy Mother of God; yet she became so by the same superior Divine power which enabled her to attain the utmost limit of the created capacity; and thus she operated supernaturally, so as to be unequalled superior to all created things, inferior to the Creator alone. Hence in Mary was to be found in the highest degree of perfection the innocence of Abel, the faith of Abraham, the constancy of Joshua, the wisdom of Solomon, the humility of David, the meekness of Moses, the patience of Job, the zeal of Phineas, the prudence of Rebecca, the courage of Judith, the compassion of Esther, the eloquence of Abigail; and all these different qualifications of the above-named agents of God were found collectively and in the highest degree of perfection in Mary, on account of her higher vocation, so that her power should be *in Jerusalem*; that is, that she should surpass all other creatures in their perfections, and should participate in the infinite perfection of God, as far as a pure creature may attain.

With such a rule before our eyes, we proceed to notice more particularly some of the gratuitous graces given by the Holy Trinity to Mary, by which she had to contribute to the

salvation and sanctification of men, much more than all the others whom God had ever employed in the promotion of His glory.

The apostle St. Paul specifies the different gratuitous graces very expressly in his first Epistle to the Corinthians (xii. 8-10), and teaches that there are nine kinds, which, he says, are distributed to different persons by the same Holy Spirit. 'To one, indeed, by the Spirit (he says), is given *the word of wisdom*; and to another, *the word of knowledge*, according to the same Spirit; to another, *faith* in the same Spirit; to another, the grace of *healing* in one Spirit; to another, the *working of miracles*; to another, *prophecy*; to another, the *discerning of spirits*; to another, *diverse kinds of tongues*; to another, *interpretation of speeches*.' Now St. Thomas, the oracle of theology already quoted (p. iii. q. 27, art. 5 ad 3), who is followed on this point by the greater number of theologians, holds for certain that the Most Holy Virgin 'had had all possible graces, at least *inherent*, and that she also possessed *in act*, those which were not repugnant to her sex and condition, and which were expedient for the sublime ministry for which she was destined by God.' Accordingly, we must say that the Holy Virgin had received by excellence the gift of wisdom and the virtue of working miracles, as well as the spirit of prophecy: nevertheless she did not possess the use of all the gratuitous graces, this being a prerogative which alone belonged to Jesus Christ. However, she had the use of those which were expedient for her condition. For example, she received the use of the gift of wisdom, by which she was most wonderfully illuminated and enlightened in her perpetual and sublime contemplations; but she did not receive the use of it to employ it publicly in preaching the Gospel, because such was not expedient for her sex. She indeed possessed the grace of working miracles, but not the actual use, especially during the time that Jesus Christ preached the Gospel, so that divine omnipotence might shine forth in Him, and in those He sent to preach and confirm His doctrine by miracles. Hence the Holy Virgin, as well as the great precursor, John the Baptist, did not perform any miracle during the life of our Lord, *ut omnes Christo*

*intenderent*, in order that the attention of the people might not be divided among many, and that they might have their eyes and ears open for Jesus Christ alone.

In the prosecution of the present subject, we are going to show in particular which were the gratuitous graces bestowed on the Blessed Virgin. First of all, and principally, she possessed the gift of *wisdom*; that is, a most sublime knowledge of the most profound mysteries which faith obscurely teaches us, as that of the Trinity of God, of the Incarnation of the Word, as well all that was to be fulfilled most wonderfully in the entire economy of the Redemption; so that no one has ever penetrated so far into the Divine power as the Most Holy Virgin. Jesus and Mary were in the Church, as the sun and the moon in the material world. When the light of the sun is wanting, the moon supplies its absence, and illuminates us with the light which she receives from it. After the ascension of Jesus Christ, by which we were deprived of His visible presence, the Most Holy Virgin was the second sun of the entire Church; so that, according to tradition, she instructed the Apostles, and explained to them many mysteries. The Apostles, of course, were filled with the Holy Ghost, in order that they might be the oracles of the world; nevertheless, we presume it is not an exaggeration to say that they often consulted the Holy Virgin as the living commentary of all the words of Jesus Christ, and the interpreter of His intentions. Moreover, the same Apostles and Evangelists learnt from the Holy Virgin the things relative to the infancy and childhood of our Saviour. Thus, she was the most wise mistress of the Church, but only as a private and humble instructress. Hence Eusebius of Emisa (in *Evang. de Festo Ascent.*) says: 'Mary, being most wise, preserved in her heart all the words of Jesus Christ, and kept them for us, and caused them to be registered, in order that according to her instruction their recital and dictation should be published and preached throughout the world, and given to us to read.'

The great power of faith as regards the working of miracles is demonstrated in St. Matthew (xvii. 19), where our Lord speaks thus: 'If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed,



you shall say to this mountain, Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove ; and nothing shall be impossible to you.' However, the power of working miracles is not precisely the gift of faith, as, according to St. Thomas, the *gift of faith* consists in the power of easily convincing others of the truths of religion, which supposes that he who possesses that virtue is himself first strongly persuaded of those truths. And it is a grace which God pours upon the lips of preachers, and which He gave abundantly to the Apostles when He sent them to preach the Gospel throughout the world, and by which they were so powerful in converting cities, provinces, and kingdoms to the faith. They easily spread the Christian faith among others, because they possessed the gift of faith themselves. But how can it be said that the Blessed Virgin possessed *this gift*, when she was not designed to preach the Gospel like the Apostles? Doubtless the Holy Virgin possessed the gift of faith, and that in a more perfect degree than all the Apostles ; and we have an evident proof of this in the Gospel, when she obtained of Jesus Christ the first miracle in favour of the guests invited to the marriage of Cana. Apparently, indeed, our Lord did not seem inclined to work the miracle she asked of Him ; she nevertheless firmly believed that He would do so. And that which shows still more clearly that she possessed the gift of faith, and the power of inspiring that faith into others, was that as soon as she spoke to the domestics, and told them to do what Jesus Christ commanded them, she had the power of making them immediately believe, although they did not see any appearance of it.

With regard to the gift of *prophecy*, we cannot doubt that the Blessed Virgin had it ; since the whole Church regards and admires the prophecy which she pronounced concerning herself in the canticle of the *Magnificat*, chanted in the exuberant joy of her heart when she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth. She saw in spirit all the honours which would be rendered to her Divine Son by angels and by men, in heaven and on earth, even till the consummation of ages. The gift of prophecy is to foresee future events, or things that are far distant in time, before they occur. The Most

Holy Virgin prophesied that all nations throughout the world, and all generations of men who should succeed one another during all ages, should declare her blessed, on account of her supereminent dignity as Mother of God: 'Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.' And we have ever seen, and shall always see, the fulfilment of her prophecy in the honours which have been and shall be paid to her in every place and by every description of people; not only by the mouths of saints, but also by the mouths of sinners; not only by Catholics, but also by dissenters; not only by Christians, but by infidels and idolaters, by Turks and barbarians; even by Satan and his fellow tribe of accursed spirits.

Let us now inquire if the Holy Virgin possessed the gift of the *discernment of spirits*. The virtue, by which we are enabled to discover spirits, consists in a Christian prudence which is not subject to be deceived by any human artifice, nor by any dallying with temptation, nor by the illusion of the devil, nor by hypocrisy, nor by the false appearance of any counterfeit or assumed virtue. It is a light which, like the sun in the material world, displays the path of dissimulation and falsehood, disperses the clouds, and discovers the most hidden secrets of the soul. It is a certain participation of the infinite wisdom of God, who alone knows perfectly the secrets of hearts, *Ipse enim novit abscondita cordis*. By means of this gift, many saints have been able to see secret sins, which were hidden in the bottom of the conscience of persons. By means of this same gratuitous grace it is that so many of the saints have discovered the artifice of those who desired to practise deception on them. The Most Holy Virgin never showed a more certain *use* of the power of discerning spirits, nor on a more important occasion, than when the angel came to salute her, and announced to her on the part of God, that she should become the Mother of the Son of the Most High. A virgin who did not possess the grace of discerning spirits, would have believed that it was a demon transformed into an angel of light, and would have taken him for a tempter, on hearing him tell her that she should become a mother in spite of her virginity, and that she was to become Mother of God, who regarded herself as a most

vile creature. But she possessing the grace of discerning spirits, in a moment of reflection upon the words of that heavenly ambassador, knew that he was the angel of the Lord. She saw also clearly, according to the opinion of some holy fathers, the essence and spiritual substance of the angel through the veil of an extraneous body, with which he was clothed. Such a gift of discerning spirits was possessed by her in the highest degree of perfection, beyond that in which any other possessed it, except Jesus Christ our Lord.

With regard to the gift of *languages*, the Holy Virgin must have possessed it as well as the Apostles. She, indeed, ought not only to understand languages, but also to speak them, because she would have been in want of this grace on many occasions, and God would not have deprived her of what was necessary for the accomplishment of the aims of Divine Providence. For example, when the Magi came from the East to adore the Infant Jesus at Bethlehem, it was necessary that she should understand their language, as well as speak it. When she went into Egypt, and remained there several years, in order to save her Divine Infant from the persecution of Herod, it was necessary for her to understand and speak the language of those parts. Besides, it is reasonable to suppose and believe, that after the ascension of our Divine Lord, when the Christian faith began to be diffused and spread over the most distant countries, many came from afar to see the Holy Mother of the Redeemer, and to honour her; she then must have understood them and been able to speak their language. Again, it is worthy of belief, that those who came from distant countries in order to bless their eyes with the sight of this great miracle and heavenly prodigy, as she was styled by St. Ignatius and St. Denis the Areopagite, should enjoy the satisfaction of hearing in their respective languages the divine oracles from her own mouth. It is therefore to be believed that the gift of languages was necessary, and therefore was given to her in order to enable her to understand and speak them all. In conclusion, the only rule whereby we can discover the number, the measure, and the greatness of the gratuitous favours

of Mary, is her divine maternity, which embraces eminently all the gratuitous graces, and beyond comparison surpasses them. But as there is no human rule or measure whereby we can ascertain the grandeur and glory of the Divine Maternity, so immeasurable and superior to human comprehension must be all the graces and prerogatives of our Blessed Lady.

In conclusion, among the gratuitous graces bestowed upon our Blessed Lady, we rank her *personal beauty*. It is a truth of faith that Jesus Christ, in accordance with the prediction of the Royal Prophet, was the most beautiful among men, 'Thou art beautiful above the sons of men' (Ps. xlv. 3), so that He exhibited in His Person the type of beauty. He was infinite in beauty as regards His Divinity; more beautiful than any created spirit as regards the qualities of His soul; more beautiful was He than the sun or the moon in His glorified body; the most beautiful among mortal men in His earthly body. Now, from whom did He take this body? Not indeed from an earthly father, since he had none; consequently He took flesh from His mother alone. Now, does not a beautiful son presuppose a beautiful mother? For this is the normal rule of nature, that the beauty of children is derived from the beauty of their parents, save when incidental circumstances occur to make nature deviate from her rule. But this deviation cannot be supposed in the conception and growth of the body of Mary; because nature was so influenced by grace, as to act in the most perfect manner; nay, insomuch as her conception was immaculate, grace was the principal element, so that the formation of Mary's body in the womb of St. Anne was the effect of grace rather than of nature. Hence we infer, that the beauty of Mary's body was akin to that of her divine Son in its nature, and only differed in degree, since in Him everything was brighter and more glorious on account of the Divinity which dwelt within Him. If then Jesus Christ was so perfect in the proportions of the different parts of his adorable body; if so perfect in His visage, in His harmonious voice, in His gentle appearance, in His graceful manners; ought not Mary to be like him? Most certainly; she ought to possess these graces, as will appear when we consider, that in order to be the worthy

Mother of God, she must be endowed with all the inward and outward perfections of which a creature is capable. But of outward perfections, one is personal beauty; this, then, was a requirement necessary to confer nobility and dignity to the creature chosen by the Most Holy Trinity to be the Mother of the Divine Word.

Moreover, it is to be considered, that the body of the Blessed Virgin, being perfectly disposed by the Creator for the express purpose that she might give her flesh to form the body of Him Who should be the Throne of the Divinity, and in which body the beauty of the Eternal Father should appear; it was requisite that her body should be so beautifully created as to be the fit instrument of the generation of the most beautiful among the sons of men, the very Son of God. If Eve was created with a perfect body like that of Adam, was it not fitting that the body of Mary should be as perfect as that of Eve? Nay, rather would I say much more so, as it was destined to bring forth, not ordinary children as Eve did, but the 'First-born of many brethren,' the Holiest of the holy. If Eve had such a beautiful body, though God foresaw that she would soon become a sinner; did not Mary, the antitype of Eve, deserve to be endowed with a body highly superior in beauty to that of Eve, especially on consideration of her perpetual fidelity to her Creator, of her observance of perpetual chastity, and of her being always an object most dear to the heart of her God? If Mary had all possible perfections of spirit, should she not also have all corporal ones? If she possessed what was more valuable, why should she not possess what was less estimable? Indeed, the same God, Author both of nature and of grace, has been no less liberal and generous in adorning beloved Mary with all natural, as well as supernatural, endowments. It was the endeavour of Divine Wisdom to make her a type of created perfection both spiritual and bodily. As it was convenient that Christ's humanity, on account of his personal union with God, should shine in all natural and supernatural perfections in a high degree of excellence, so it was fitting that after the humanity of Jesus Christ should shine also Mary's beauty; for the obvious reason that next to a hypostatic union with God,

there is no union closer than that of Mary with the Divine Word. She felt the greatest happiness in contemplating the celestial beauties of her Divine Son, while Jesus Christ took delight in contemplating in Mary a ray of His divinity; so that with reason we may say with the Royal Psalmist, that 'the King loved greatly His likeness.'

Certainly, if we consult tradition, we find Mary acknowledged by antiquity as the most amiable, gracious, and beautiful of all women, though adorned with such a celestial beauty as was calculated to produce in those who looked upon her, nought but veneration and respect. This was done by Almighty God in order that there might be accomplished in Mary the end for which God adorns His creatures with beauty, which is, that men should behold in them a ray of His Divinity, so that from a created beauty they might pass to consider the divine beauty of the Creator. When man contemplates a created beauty detached from its Creator, and fixes on it alone his thoughts and heart, then he makes void the end of creation, violates the law of the Creator, and becomes a rebel to his own Author. Such an inconvenience did not happen in looking at Mary, as by a special grace of God, her rare beauty, far from causing any dangerous effect among others, was calculated to elevate their hearts to God as the pure fount of all beauty, and to produce feelings of piety and devotion. This is so true that, according to the opinion of ancient historians, if faith had not thought the contrary, Mary would have been considered even a divinity. And also now how salutary and sweet it is to look devoutly on an image of Mary! The rising of the mind and heart from it to the prototype in Heaven, affords indeed great comfort and consolation.

Since then it was nothing less than the infinite power of God that made Mary capable of becoming the Mother of the Eternal Word, so it is only God who can ascertain the measure and weight of the natural and supernatural gifts of Mary. And this cannot be otherwise, as it is a fixed principle of the Angelic doctor (p. iii. q. 27, art. 5), that 'the more a thing approximates to its principle, the more fully it participates in the same principle.' The angels, who approach

nearer to God than men, participate in the divine perfections more abundantly than men; nay, among the angels themselves there is a difference in their participation of the divine perfections; so that as there are various hierarchies of angels, it follows that the hierarchy the most distant participates less than the others; and that the first hierarchy, being nearest to God, participates most largely in the divine perfections. Now, we will ask, Could any created being ever have attained a closer proximity to God than Mary? 'No,' replies the Angelic doctor, with the holy fathers; 'the Blessed Virgin was the nearest to Jesus Christ.' And this, according to the same doctor, brings Mary into a certain union with the Infinite, a certain affinity with God—*affinitas cum Deo*. This being so, what a wealth of grace, what a number of most rare privileges and high favours, must not have been conferred by God on a creature so near to Him; a creature so intimately bound to Him? The honour of the Father was at stake, for whose only-begotten Son a worthy Mother must be provided. Likewise the honour of the Son was interested, whose humanity must be received from Mary; and lastly, the honour of the Holy Ghost was concerned, by Whom must be effected in Mary the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. And, on the other hand, Mary had not been a worthy daughter of God the Father, nor a worthy Mother of His only-begotten Son, nor a worthy Spouse of the Holy Ghost, if she had not had the utmost plenitude of graces and favours, which the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost could give her. As the works of God are all perfect (Deut. xxxii. 4), and appropriate to the ends for which they are made, the Woman elected by Him to co-operate with Him in the great work of Redemption, ought to be perfect and worthy of such a high destination. She should be such as to render it impossible to find another like her, either in heaven or on earth; she should be adorned with as many graces and privileges as were fitting the unheard-of dignity of Mother of God. Mary, besides, was the work of grace rather than of nature; and as grace is in proportion to the love that God has for a creature, and Mary was loved by God more than all creatures, so she was privileged to receive a greater abundance of graces, favours, and

prerogatives, than any one else could ever obtain. Therefore Mary, on account of the gratuitous graces received from the Holy Trinity, became the worthy Mother of God, and as such, she is an object to all Christians of veneration and confidence.

2. *From the early Fathers of the Church, as Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

St. Basil (in Isai. c. viii.) says: 'That Mary was a prophetess nobody will contradict, who remembers the words spoken by her, being inspired by prophetic spirit.'

St. Athanasius (Serm. in Annunt. tom. ii. p. 401) thus addresses the Blessed Virgin: 'O Most Holy Virgin, for the feeble eulogiums we give thee, grant us great gifts from the treasures of thy graces, thou who art full of grace.'

St. Ephrem (vol. ii. p. 327) says: 'Eve's single-mindedness was a stranger to subtlety, and she became without understanding. Mary, with discernment, made her subtlety the salt of her single-mindedness. The salt of innocence has no savour without subtlety; nor is there any hope for the words of cunning without single-mindedness.'

St. Ambrose (de Virg. lib. ii. c. ii. Oper. tom. iii. p. 209, Migne) exclaims: 'Who has more nobility than the Mother of God? What brighter than she whom Brightness selected?

St. Chrysostom (Expos. Evang. in Luc. lib. ii. Oper. tom. i. p. 1564, Migne) says: 'It is not possible to find a prophetess greater than the Mother of God.'

St. Augustin (Lib. de Nat. et Grat. c. xxxvi. Oper. tom. x. p. 267, Migne) says: 'We know that God conferred a greater grace upon Mary than upon others, in order to be fitted to conceive and bring forth Him Who was impeccable.'

St. Peter Chrysologus (Serm. cxliii. Oper. tom. un. p. 584, Migne) exclaims: 'Truly Blessed Mary was greater than heaven, stronger than earth, larger than the world, because it was she alone who brought forth God, Whom the world cannot contain.'



*3. From Christian Archæology.*

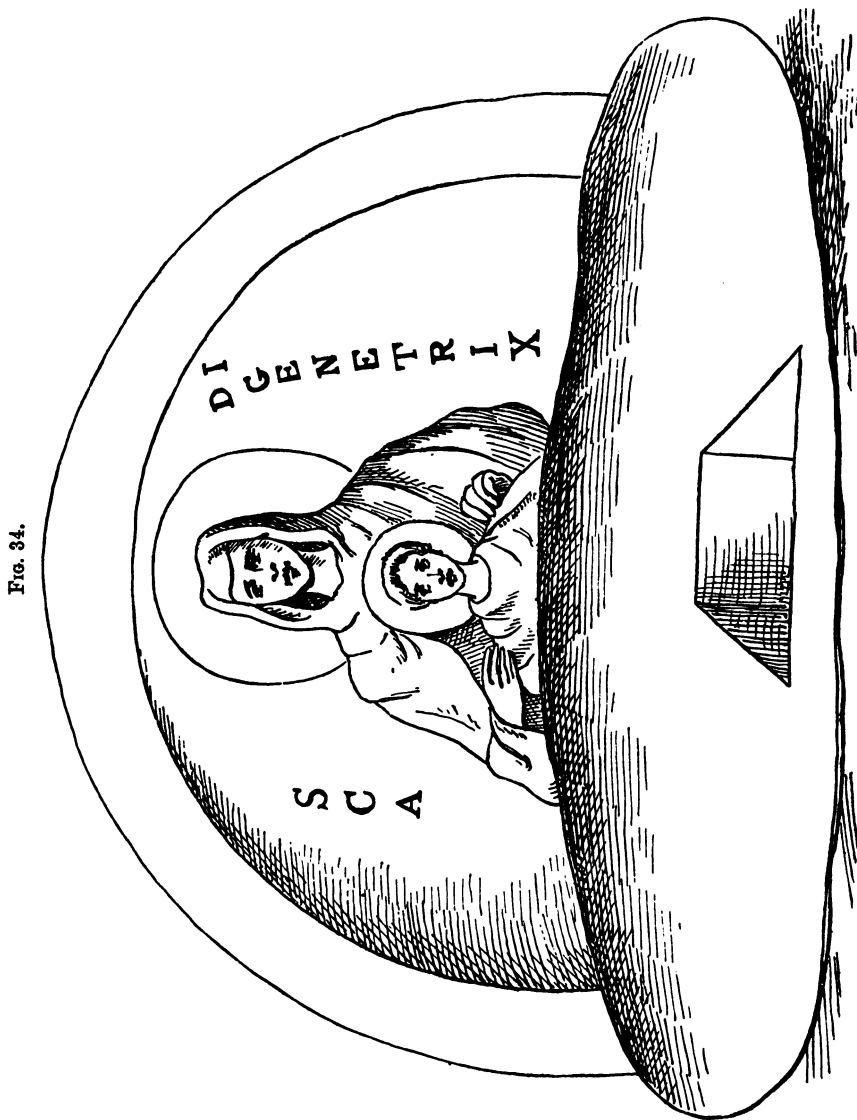
In fig. 33 we exhibit an image of the Blessed Virgin with the Divine Infant, taken from Boldetti's work, '*Osservazioni sopra i Cimiteri*' (lib. i. cap. xxxix. tav. 3, p. 202 of the Roman edit. 1720). We quote the whole passage of the author upon that picture; viz. 'The glass represents the image of the Blessed Virgin, with her Divine Son in her bosom, sitting down on a chair, the back of which is elevated. Even in remote times, the piety of the faithful showed itself affectionate to this great Queen of Heaven, by propagating her worship through sacred images, as every one who is

FIG. 33.



acquainted with the ancient Christian monuments is aware, especially of those which are found in the cemeteries. Although the pictures of the Blessed Virgin with her Divine Child became numerous after the Council of Ephesus, to show the belief of the people in Mary's Divine maternity, contradicted by the infamous Nestorius, nevertheless there are many of them anterior to that epoch; among which is a glass I found myself in the Cemetery of Callisto, dyed with blood, situated in the sepulchre of a martyr, belonging, as

may be believed, to the time of the persecutions before the time of Constantine, and consequently of Nestorius. On



beholding behind the head of the Infant and the Virgin, the diadem, or disk of light called a *nimbus*, one will perceive the

custom of some ancient Christians in adorning the head of our Saviour. The third figure in the said glass indicates a young man standing with a fan in his hands, in the act of fanning the Infant. He seems to be a deacon, to whom formerly belonged the duty of driving away the flies during the time of the divine sacrifice.' The same picture is also to be found in the work of Agincourt (tom. xii. n. 22), who says that such a picture is made upon the bottom of a glass used by the ancient Christians.

The next fig., 34, is taken from Arringhi (tom. ii. lib. iv. cap. xlii. p. 353), and from Bianchini (tav. 3, sect. i.), who gives the following description of the same: 'An image of the Mother of God holding her infant Jesus, carved on the lunette of a cubiculum in the Cemetery of St. Julius (Pope), in the Via Flaminia, on each side of which are perpendicularly the following words: SCA. DI. GENETRIX.'

FIG. 35.



Fig. 35 is taken from Agincourt (vol. vi. tav. 17, fig. 14), who says: 'The Virgin is sitting down surrounded by angels and virgins. This composition of the Greek school occupies the façade of the Church of St. Cecilia in Rome, rebuilt in the year 817.'

## SECTION II.

### PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

MELANCHTHON, the coadjutor of Luther in the so-called Reformation, says (in p. 2 Chro.) that the Blessed Virgin, after the ascension of our Lord, 'directed the Apostles, as well as the first believers.'

Bishop Pearson ('The Creed,' London, 1692, p. 178) says: 'The necessity of believing our Saviour to be born of the Virgin Mary, will appear both in respect of her who was the Mother, and of Him who was the Son. In respect of her, it was necessary that we might perpetually preserve an esteem for her person proportionately to so high a dignity. It was her own prediction, "from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed;" but the obligation is ours to call her, to esteem her so. If Elizabeth cried out with so loud a voice, "Blessed art thou among women," when Christ was but newly conceived in her womb, what expression of honour and admiration can we think sufficient now that Christ is in heaven, and that Mother with Him? Far be it from any Christian to derogate from that special privilege granted her, which is incommunicable to any other.'

Ecolampadius (Serm. de laudando in Maria Deo) says: 'She (Mary) is over all the rest; she is queen of all; she has been honoured by God in preference to every one. There is no other like her. What more is there wanted to prove that she is eminently distinguished?'

Dr. Hickes, 'On the due Praise and Honour of the Virgin Mary' (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 289), says: 'To be chosen for the Mother of God was the greatest honour and favour that ever God conferred upon any human creature. None of the special honours and favours that He did to any of the saints before or since, are equivalent to the honour of being the Mother of God. And therefore we may be sure that God, who said, Those that honour her, I will honour, would not have done so great an honour to any daughter of Abraham, but alone to one who best deserved it; to one of the holiest among the daughters of Israel; to the most heavenly-minded virgin of the tribe of Judah, and the royal house of David; who had no superior for holiness on earth.'

The same (p. 292) says: 'It is our duty who have the benefit of her example to honour and praise her name, and commemorate her virtues and set forth her praises, in whom there was a concurrence of so many divine virtues—such a strong faith, such abasing humility, such pure chastity, and

all other graces in as much perfection as was consistent with human frailty.'

It is very consoling for a Christian to see Mary, on account of her *gratuitous graces*, acknowledged by all as the *worthy* Mother of God, and consequently an object so worthy of veneration and confidence.

## CHAPTER X.

OUR BLESSED LADY BECAME THE WORTHY MOTHER OF GOD,  
AND AN OBJECT OF VENERATION AND TRUST, IN CONSIDER-  
ATION ALSO OF THE SANCTIFYING GRACE WITH WHICH SHE  
WAS ENDOWED.

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### SECTION I.

#### CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

##### 1. *From Holy Scripture.*

To hold the office of first minister in a large kingdom, with all its relative prerogatives, is undoubtedly a great honour; and a person so qualified is entitled to much consideration. Nevertheless, the sole appointment of a person to an important charge, properly speaking, does not constitute the merit of the privileged officer, as his promotion might have been the effect only of the good will and favour of his sovereign towards him, independently of any real merit of his own; and such a person might be styled the minister of his sovereign, though not properly his worthy minister. Personal qualifications and skill are what form his real merit. In building up the superstructure of the Blessed Virgin's greatness, we placed its foundation upon her dignity as Mother of God, which required most singular and unparalleled graces and privileges. To this some may object, and say that the whole merit of Mary consisted merely in her having been the instrument of the coming of the Redeemer into this world, rather than in her having any personal merit to entitle her to such an exalted dignity and office. To answer this objection, and show the real merit of our Blessed Lady, we shall demonstrate in the present chapter, that her high

prerogatives remarkably correspond with her personal virtues, and that, independently of the gratuitous gifts conferred upon her, she herself earned a large amount of merit by faithfully corresponding with the sanctifying grace which God had bestowed on her, so that on account also of her inherent sanctity and merits she became the worthy Mother of God.

The foundation of a great edifice ought to be laid strong and deep. The higher a building is to be raised, the lower should the foundation be sunk, in order to be the more lasting and secure. The edifice of Mary's sanctity was the greatest building in the Christian supernatural world ; as no other human creature than Mary could have a sanctity corresponding to the dignity of Mother of God. As she stooped low, she has been exalted high ; and the chief acts of her humility have become the steps of her glory. It was indeed because of her *humility*, incomparably superior to that of all other saints, that she was chosen by the Most Holy Trinity to become the Mother of her Creator. Mary, therefore, through her humility became the worthy Mother of God, and so contributed powerfully to the ransom of fallen man.

As humility is the foundation of all Christian perfection, so *faith* is the root of all goodness and of all other virtues ; so that without it no virtue can exist. Humility cannot be perfect without faith, and faith likewise requires humility, because no one can do his duty towards God, without first humbling his reason and understanding to faith. Hence the faith of Mary had the precedence of all her other virtues—of her simplicity and constancy and fortitude. Is it God that speaks ? Is it a messenger of God ? Is it a human authority established by God ? This was enough for Mary to believe immediately, without any hesitation ; hence faith was in Mary the spring of all virtues.

Nor was her *hope* less perfect. She is fully convinced that God is omnipotent, merciful, and faithful in His divine promises, and she felt certain of seeing the fulfilment of whatever had been revealed.

As no true virtue can exist without charity, and as charity is the queen of all virtues, so our Blessed Lady possessed *charity*, both towards God and her neighbour, in such

a paramount degree, as to confer transcendent perfection on her other virtues. What strong and indissoluble bonds of love united her heart to the heart of Jesus, no one can presume to understand, nor even to imagine. Having with God but one will, she was identified with all the dispensations of Providence, and carried them out perfectly as far as she was concerned in them. Love towards God brought her to love her neighbour with the most bountiful heroic love. Through the influence of her ardent love, she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth; through a charitable motive she solicited a miracle from her Divine Son at Cana of Galilee; moved by the same love, she shared the pains and torments of her Jesus with the pains of her maternal heart; and after offering her life in sacrifice with the life of her beloved Son for the salvation of man, she, being commissioned by Him, became the spiritual Mother of all Christians, and as such continued her tender love towards us, as if we were her own children.

Mary, having been pre-elected for the Mother of Him who is purity by essence, it was requisite that she should be the *purest creature* among the children of Adam; and such she was; so that, following the interior inspiration of grace, she chose the state of perpetual virginity, making a vow of it to God.

*Patience* being a virtue necessary to bear the difficulties and troubles of life, the Blessed Virgin possessed this virtue in the most perfect degree, so that she accomplished patiently her mission, accompanied by many difficulties and troubles.

In order to obtain a victory over our spiritual enemies, according to the admonition of the Holy Ghost, *obedience* is necessary. Though the Blessed Virgin had no spiritual enemies to conquer, as all her appetites were perfectly in accordance with faith and reason, nevertheless by her operations she was shown to be a perfect type of true obedience to God, to His Church, and to human authorities.

By *gratitude* we are thankful to God for the benefits He has bestowed upon us, and by fulfilling this duty, we acquire a title to receive new favours from His bounty. By this virtue Mary was always grateful to God for the favours so largely bestowed upon her, and received by it a continual addition of new favours.



Mortification being the salt of spiritual life, Mary practised continual *mortification* from her infancy till the last moment of her blessed life. She disregarded all the comforts of life, all honours and temporal advantages, and was fond only of poverty, contempt, pains, sufferings and of anything else which was contrary to the desires of degenerate nature. She lived constantly following her Divine Son as closely as she could, by imitating Him in the heroism of all virtues, and in the bonds of the most ardent and continual love.

It is to be observed that we have only indicated in this chapter the Blessed Virgin's virtues, as we propose to speak of them to some extent in the second part of this work. In the meantime let us admire in Mary in a general way the effects operated in her by sanctifying grace, in number and measure above all saints either of the old or new covenant: a faith stronger and more alive than that given to Abraham the father of the believers, and other patriarchs; a hope more firm and constant than that of the Prophets; a charity more intense and ardent than that of the seraphim; a zeal and fortitude greater than that of the Apostles; a constancy greater and more courageous than that of the martyrs; a sanctity more sublime than that of the confessors; a purity more immaculate and higher than that of the virgins.

Now, from what has been stated, it appears that the pre-eminent privileges of Mary beautifully contrasted with her inherent sanctity, so that she, through the perfect exercise of faith, hope, charity, humility, purity, obedience, mortification, and all other theological, moral and intellectual virtues, fully and perfectly corresponding to sanctifying grace, became the worthy Mother of God, and as such entitled to our especial veneration and confidence.

## 2. *From the Early Fathers of the Church, as Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

To give further evidence upon this subject, we shall bring forward the testimonies of the fathers of the early Church.

The *faith* and *obedience* of Mary are stated by the following holy fathers. St. Justin (*Dial. cum Tryp.* 100) says: 'Eve

brought forth disobedience and death ; but the Virgin Mary, taking faith and joy . . . answered, Be it done unto me according to thy word.' The same is illustrated by St. Irenæus (adv. Hær. lib. iii.): 'Eve being disobedient became the cause of death both to herself and to the whole human race. . . . Mary being obedient became both to herself and to the whole human race the cause of salvation. . . . What Eve a virgin bound by incredulity, Mary a virgin unclosed by faith.' Likewise Tertullian (lib. vi. de Carne Christi, c. xvii.): 'Eve had believed the serpent, Mary believed Gabriel; the fault which the one committed by believing, the other by believing blotted out.' Also St. Augustine (de Sanct. Virgin. lib. un. Oper. tom. vi. p. 398, Migne) says: 'Mary is more blessed by taking the faith of Christ than by conceiving the flesh of Christ.' St. Ambrose (in Luc. lib. ii. Oper. tom. i. p. 1561, Migne) says: 'Consider that Mary did not doubt, but believed; and for it she obtained the fruit of faith.'

In reference to the *humility* of Mary, St. Augustine (Serm. li. § 18) says: 'Mary merited to bring forth the Son of the Most High, and yet she was most humble; nor did she put herself before her husband, even in the order of the name, so as to say, I and thy father; but, thy father and I. She does not attend to the dignity of her womb, but to her rank as a wife. For the humble Christ had not taught His mother to be proud.' St. Ambrose (in Levit. lib. ii.) says: 'Behold humility! She who is chosen to be the mother, calls herself the handmaid of the Lord; for, as she was to give birth to Him who was humble, she also should show the same humility.' And the same holy father (de Virg. lib. ii. Oper. tom. iii. p. 210, Migne) says: 'Mary became also more humble since she knew that she had been elected by God.'

With regard to the *purity* of the Blessed Virgin, Origen (or the author of the Homilies, Hom. III. in Matt. c. ii.) says: 'This Infant does not need a father upon earth, since He has an incorruptible Father in Heaven; He does not require a mother in heaven, because He has a pure and immaculate mother on earth, which is the Blessed Virgin.' St. Basil (Orat. de Annunt.) says: 'Hail, full of grace, paradise of corruptless chastity, in which the tree of life is to be

planted to bring forth the fruits of life to all.' Theodoretus (in Cant. lib. iii.) says: 'Among the numerous souls of men that are saved, there is only one like a chosen dove, which in purity surpasses the very cherubim and seraphim; one who gave birth to Christ, the virgin mother, the Virgin Mary.' St. Augustine (Serm. xiv. de Nativitate) says: 'The gate that looks towards the east shall be shut. (Ezek. xxiv.) What is this shut gate in the house of the Lord, but that Mary shall ever remain untouched? And what is this, a man shall not pass through it (the gate), but that Joseph never knew her (his ever-virgin spouse)? And what is it that God alone enters and goes out by that gate, but that she was filled by the Holy Ghost? And what is this that the gate shall for ever remain shut, but that Mary was a virgin during parturition, and a virgin after parturition?' St. Ambrose (Inst. Virg. c. vii.) says: 'So great was the grace of purity in Mary, that not only did she preserve the grace of purity in herself, but even in those on whom she looked she bestowed the stamp of purity.' St. Peter Chrysologus (Serm. cxlii.) says: 'In thy conception, in thy parturition, thy modesty increased, thy chastity was augmented, and thy integrity strengthened.'

With respect to *prudence* and *wisdom*, the holy fathers represent the Most Holy Virgin as showing these virtues throughout her entire conduct. St. Irenæus (adv. Hær. lib. v. c. 19) says: 'In the same manner as Eve by the words of an angel was so greatly seduced as to flee from God, so Mary through the words of an angel was so greatly purified as to bear or carry God, being obedient to His word. And as the former was seduced so as to lose God, so the latter was persuaded to obey God, in order that the Virgin Mary might become the advocate of the virgin Eve; and in the same manner as mankind was condemned to death through a virgin, so, in like proportion, a virgin's disobedience was repaired by a virgin's obedience, and the prudence of the serpent was overcome in the simplicity of the dove.' Origen (or the author of the Homilies, Hom. VI. in Luc.) says: 'As it is said, Hail, full of grace, where I have read it elsewhere in the Scriptures I do not remember. This salutation was

reserved for Mary alone; for if Mary had known that a similar expression had been formed for some other person (as she was possessed of a knowledge of the law, and was holy, and by daily reading had made herself acquainted with the predictions of the prophets), the salutation would never have frightened her as being strange.' The holy fathers further acknowledge the prudence of Mary prefigured in Abigail, who conciliated David, and prevented him from punishing the foolish Nabal.

In reference to *charity* towards God, St. Ambrose (de Virgin. lib. ii.) says: 'Nobody can be found more adorned with the sublime gift of contemplation than Mary. Her spirit, being always in accordance with her heart, never lost sight of Him Who was loved by her more ardently than by all seraphim taken together. The whole of her life was a continual exercise of the most pure love towards her God, so much so, when sleep came to shut her eyes, her heart remained awake, and continued to pray.' With regard to her charity towards her neighbours, St. Ephrem (de Laud. Deip.) says: 'Mary was the most excellent and efficacious reconciliation of the entire world.' The same saint, in another part of the same work, calls the Most Holy Virgin, 'the secure safety of all Christians that have recourse to her.' St. Augustine (de Sanct. Virginit. lib. un. cap. vi. Oper. tom. vi. p. 399, edit. Migne) says that Mary 'is really the Mother of the members of Christ, which we are, because through charity she has jointly effected that faithful should be born in the Church.' St. John Chrysostomus (apud Metaphrasten): 'A great miracle indeed is the Blessed Virgin! What is there greater and more sublime to be found in the universe than the holy Virgin? Who more holy than she? No Prophets, no Apostles, no dominations, no cherubim, no seraphim, no order of created beings, either visible or invisible, can be found greater or more excellent than she.' Upon these words, Saurez (tom. xvii. Oper. page 18, sec. 4) says: 'No exception is made by Chrysostome as to whether the Blessed Virgin be compared with them all, singly or collectively; that Mary is superior in sanctity, not only to each saint or angel of Paradise, but also to all the saints and

angels together.' Thus in Mary was united the innocence of the virgins, the humility of the confessors, the patience of the martyrs, the zeal of the Apostles, the science of the prophets, the faith of the patriarchs, the charity of the angelic spirits. Therefore, from what we have stated from the Holy Scripture and the early tradition of the fathers, it appears that our Blessed Lady corresponded with great perfection to *sanctifying grace*, and that through her faith, hope, charity, obedience, humility, and other virtues, she deserved to be acknowledged and venerated as the *worthy* Mother of God.

### 3. *From Christian Archæology.*

To show that Mary was acknowledged by the early Christians as the Holy Mother of God, we exhibit in fig. 36, an image of the Blessed Virgin, taken from the Cemetery of Callisto in Rome, and referred to by Bianchini (tav. 1, sec. ii. No. 28).

FIG. 36.



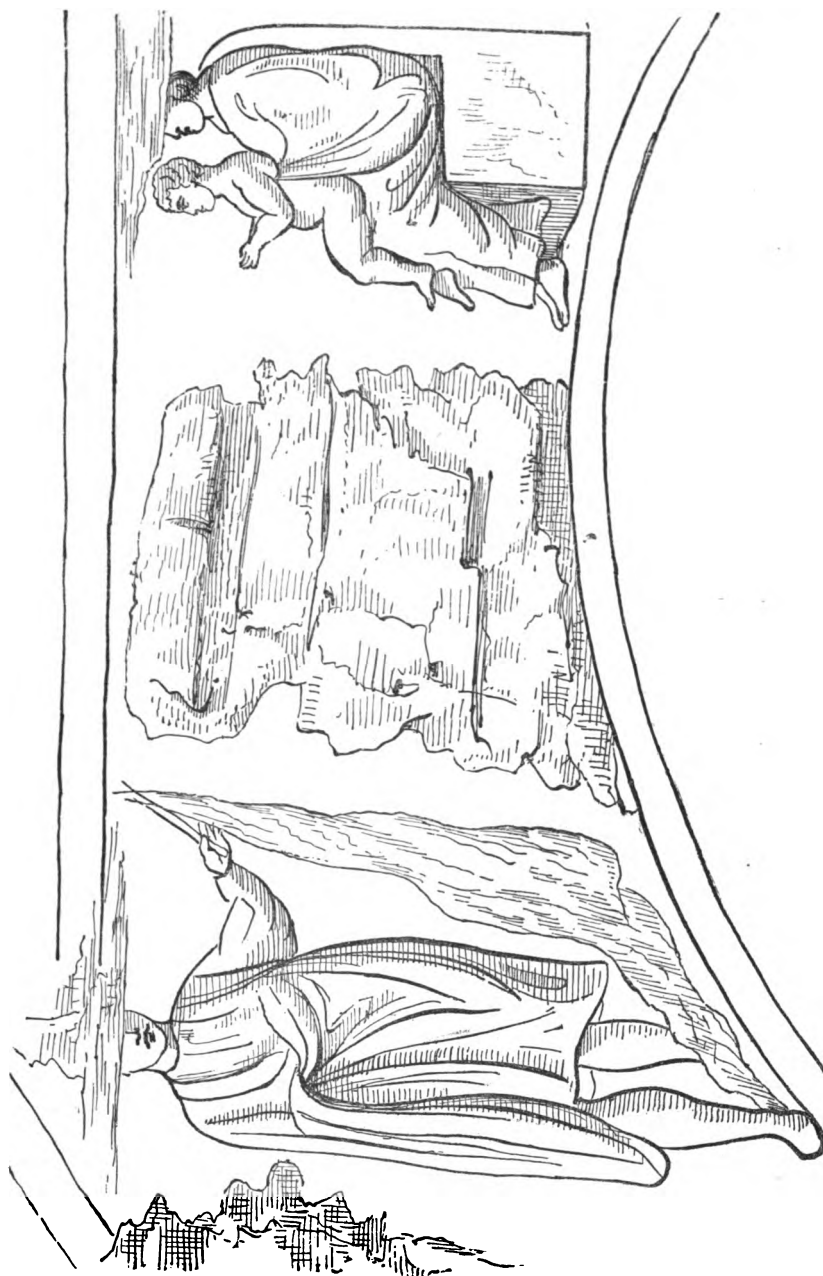
FIG. 37.



In fig. 37 we exhibit another illustration, mentioned by Agincourt (vol. vi. tav. 10, No. 10), representing the Blessed Virgin with her Divine Infant, and St. John and St. Urbanus, found in the small oratory under the Church of St. Urbanus, at the Cafarella, near Rome, Via Appia.

The fig. 38 will show the same Blessed Virgin in a chair, with her Divine Infant in her arms, looking at Moses while he causes water to spring from the stone. The springing

FIG. 38.



of water from the stone was the figure of doctrine coming from Christ, the Corner-Stone of the Church, to be diffused throughout the world. Hence Mary, as an agent in the mysteries of grace, shows her Divine Infant to be that one whom Moses represented.

This fresco was found in the Cemetery of Callisto, Via Appia, and is mentioned by Arringhi (tom. i. lib. iii. cap. xxii. p. 563).

## SECTION II.

### PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

DR. JEREMY TAYLOR (*The Life of Jesus Christ*, London, 1811, sect. i. p. 19) says: 'In the days of Herod the king, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a holy maid called Mary, espoused to Joseph, and found in her a capacity and excellent disposition to receive the greatest honour that ever was done to the daughters of men. Her employment was holy and pious, her person young, her body chaste, her mind humble, and a rare depository of Divine graces. She was full of graces and excellence.' And the same (p. 28), turning to God, exclaims: 'Give me a promptness to obey Thee, to the degree and semblance of angelical alacrity: give me holy purity and piety, prudence and modesty, like those which Thou didst create in the ever-Blessed Virgin Mother of God.'

Dr. Hickes '*On the due Praise and Honour of the Virgin Mary*' (*Catholic Safeguards*, vol. ii. p. 289) says: 'If we had no particular account of her graces, we might rationally conclude all this of her from the history of our Lord's Incarnation, for nothing less than superlative holiness could receive such testimony of Divine honour from the Holy Trinity. She was, as it were, the spouse of God, co-parent with Him of the wonderful Immanuel, who was God and Man. . . . We have a particular account of those eminent graces which adorned her . . . and first, of her chastity, she was a virgin, one that knew not a man. A virgin in mind as well as body, such a virgin as never looked upon a man to lust after him;

an entire virgin who was all purity within as well as without, who never cherished unclean thoughts, nor let them grow into unchaste desires, but stifled the beginnings of lust in its first motions, keeping her body as the sanctuary or holy place, and her soul as the holiest of holies, and herself pure both in body and soul, to be the habitation of the Holy Ghost, and the tabernacle of the Son of God. We have an account of her great modesty and humility, which put her in so great disorder at the salutation of the angel. When she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and wondered what the meaning of his salutation could be. She had nothing of the pharisaical in her, as doubtless many other virgins had, who would upon such an address have concluded in favour of their holiness; but Mary was so great and eminent above the holiness of other virgins as to merit that peculiar honour of God. Mary's humility and meekness were so great that she was all blush without, and confusion within, at the appearance and compliment of the angel. She wondered what could have influenced God to send one of the seven spirits that surround His heavenly throne to visit her; she wondered what could have induced Him to honour her so greatly, and why the angel should speak unto her, as unto a holy person and the favourite of Heaven. She had a greater sense of her human imperfections and infirmities than of her virtues, and in so mean and humble opinion of herself, could not imagine why she should be blessed and praised above all those of her own sex.'

Mrs. Jameson (in her work, *Introd.* p. xxxix.) says: 'We must remember that St. Luke the Evangelist may be said to have painted that portrait of her which has been since received as the perfect type of womanhood. First, her noble tranquil humility, when she received the salutation of the angel, the complete feminine surrender of her whole being to the higher, holier will: Be it unto me according to thy word. Secondly, the decision and prudence of character shown in her visit to St. Elizabeth, her elder relative. Thirdly, the proof of her intellectual power in the beautiful hymn she has left us, "My soul doth magnify the Lord." It proves that she must have been in her time and country most rarely gifted in



mind with everything sublime, and deeply read in the Scriptures. Fourthly, she was of a contemplative and reflecting, rather than of a silent, disposition: "She kept all these sayings, and pondered on them in her heart." For she never made a boast of that wondrous and most blessed destiny to which she was called; she thought upon it in silence. Fifthly, her truly maternal devotion to her Divine Son, whom she humbly attended through His whole ministry. Sixthly, and lastly, the sublime fortitude and faith with which she followed her Son to the death scene, standing by the side of the cross till all was finished, and then went home and *lived*; for she was to be to us an example of all that a woman could endure, as well as all that a woman could be and act in this earthly life. Such was the character of Mary, such the portrait really painted by St. Luke; and, as it seems to me, these scattered, artless, unintentional notices of conduct and character convey the most perfect moral type of the intellectual, tender, simple, and heroic woman that was ever placed before us, for our edification and example.'

## CHAPTER XI.

ELIZABETH, FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST, PROCLAIMS MARY'S  
HIGH QUALIFICATIONS, AND HER RIGHT TO BE BLESSED AND  
VENERATED BY ALL GENERATIONS.

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SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From Holy Scripture.*

IN St. Luke (i. 40) it is said: 'And (Mary) entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. And she cried out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For, behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ear, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord.'

The passage of the Gospel here quoted, supplies several motives for showing our veneration towards the Blessed Mother of God, and placing our confidence in her. The first motive is to be found in those words, 'Blessed art thou among women.' It means that God had given to Mary graces greater in merit and in number than woman had ever before received, or will hereafter receive. Among these the most singular is that of her becoming mother without ceasing to be virgin, and, according to Elizabeth, this happened, because

Mary had believed the word of the angel. 'Blessed art thou that hast believed.' How wonderful are the effects of faith!

The second consists in the words, 'Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?' And by these words Elizabeth acknowledges Mary's divine maternity, a dignity which had never been conferred on any other woman, nor would ever be conferred. Although Elizabeth was a cousin of Mary, and older than she, and made by God miraculously fruitful, since she bore a son who was great in the eyes of God; nevertheless, she expressed her astonishment that the Mother of her Lord should deign to honour her with a visit. What a lesson for a proud Christian! If Elizabeth, notwithstanding her high qualifications, shows so much respect and veneration to Mary, what ought we to do? How unreasonable are those who place difficulties in the way of honouring Mary!

The third motive for venerating and having confidence in Mary, is found in these words: 'As soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.' The voice of Mary causes the leaping for joy of the Baptist in the womb of Elizabeth. This was the first grace sensibly bestowed by the Incarnate Son of God in this world, and Mary was the happy instrument of it. Nor was it a single, but a twofold grace; because, while the infant leaped in Elizabeth's womb for joy, she herself was filled with the Holy Ghost. What a motive of confidence in Mary's intercession! Could the holy fathers be wrong when they assert that Mary is made by her Divine Son the channel of graces? Indeed, we behold in this wonderful event, as it were traced, the order of Providence in doing mercy through the channel of Mary, as from Jesus Christ grace came to Mary, from Mary to the Baptist, and from the Baptist to Elizabeth. Is it not evident that Mary acted the office of intermediate between Jesus Christ and the Baptist? Then would it be going too far to say that the Son of God, out of regard for a mother whom He tenderly loved, wished that, as through her He came into the world, so through her His favours might be transmitted to men? Could it not be said that by those prophetic words in answer to Elizabeth—that

God, having regarded the humility of His handmaid, had done great things to her, and that from generation unto generation should pass His mercy—Mary might have modestly alluded to that established order of doing mercy through herself?

The fourth motive is founded on the exclamation of Elizabeth to Mary: 'Blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by God.' By these words Elizabeth closes completely the mouth of those slanderers who dare to say that Mary had hesitated, and was doubtful, when the angel spoke to her. Indeed, if Mary's faith had been defective, how could Elizabeth have given her such great praise? St. Ambrose (in Luc. lib. ii. Oper. t. ii. p. 1359, Migne) says: 'Mary, by asking How shall this be done, because I know not a man, did not doubt of the fact; but she asked only in reference to the quality of the fact; as she had already believed that it would be done, and therefore her request related only to the manner in which it should be done; so that she deserved to hear, Blessed art thou that hast believed.' We, then, must admire, with Elizabeth, Mary's perfect faith in believing that she would conceive a Son without human influence; that her virginity would remain spotless; and that her Son should be the God consubstantial with the Eternal Father. Her believing without hesitation such an incomprehensible mystery deserved indeed all praise on the part of Elizabeth, and so likewise deserves praise on the part of all Christians, who ought to repeat with Elizabeth, 'Blessed art thou that hast believed.'

Calmet, commenting upon the first chapter of St. Luke (ver. 43), says: 'Elizabeth, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, considering the high dignity of Mary, considers herself unworthy to receive her into her house. She acknowledges Mary as the Mother of God and of her Lord, and puts down beforehand the errors of the Nestorians, who denied to Mary the dignity of Mother of God.' And the same writer (ver. 44) adds: 'Elizabeth, from the sudden motion of the infant she carried in her womb, knew she was in the presence of the Mother of the Saviour, and that the infant she carried in her womb would one day rejoice at the presence of the Lord.'

Cornelius a Lapide, likewise, commenting upon the fortieth verse of the same chapter of St. Luke, says: ‘She (Mary) saluted Elizabeth, saying, “Peace be with thee,” this being the usual salutation of the Jews. This was made by the Blessed Virgin through a divine instinct. God, through the angel, had revealed to her Elizabeth’s pregnancy, tacitly admonishing her that she would do a thing grateful to God if she would pay a visit to, and salute Elizabeth. It was the purpose of God on that occasion to make known the miraculous Incarnation of the Word, accomplished in Mary as a concealed treasure.’ And (ver. 41) he further adds: ‘It is to be observed, with St. Ambrose, that Elizabeth first heard the salutation and the voice of Mary; but John felt first the force, the spirit, the efficacy of the salutation. . . . John, leaping in the womb of his mother, caused her also to rejoice, because, through the exultation of John, Elizabeth knew by the Holy Ghost that the Blessed Virgin had conceived Christ; and therefore Elizabeth saluted and venerated her as the Mother of God. . . . And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost; that is, with both the sanctifying and the gratuitous graces of God. She was already holy and just, but on that occasion she became still more just and holy. Besides, she received the gift of prophecy, and began to reveal the mysterious Incarnation of the Word of God in the Virgin, and also future things.’ And (ver. 42) ‘Elizabeth called out with a loud voice, “Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.” She, through a vehement and burning ardour and joy, infused into her by the Holy Ghost, and through the novelty and greatness of the divine mysteries revealed to her by the same Holy Ghost, exclaimed, “Thou art blessed among women in preference to all others, because thou hast been elected to be the Mother of God.”’ And (ver. 43) ‘Elizabeth exclaimed, “Whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?” These words express the highest humility and reverence; as she does not consider herself worthy of such a favour, but confesses it to be alone attributable to the goodness of God.’

A most beautiful specimen of Christian conversation was exhibited on the occasion of the visit of Mary to Elizabeth. How admirably their humility contrasted! The topics of their discourse are the greatness of God, His infinite mercy, the merit He has to be loved and served by His creatures. Though they were—the one the Mother of the Messiah, and the other the mother of His forerunner—far from being proud, they emulate each other in humbling themselves. There is no self-conceit, no self-love, no vanity of any kind in their discourse; but only do they speak of their lowliness, their want of merits, and their unworthiness to be so highly exalted. Humility, indeed, is calculated to increase the nobility of a Christian, and make him truly great before God and worthy of praise before men.

*2. From the Early Fathers of the Church, as Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

St. Irenæus (adv. Hæres. lib. iii. cap. xvi.) says: ‘When John was still in his mother’s womb, and Christ in Mary’s, he saluted his Lord, knowing Him and exulting.’

St. Athanasius, cited in the Council of Ephesus (in Ephes. p. 1401), says: ‘Jeremy, when in the womb, was sanctified; and John, when he was in the womb, leaped for joy at the voice of Mary, Mother of God.’

St. Ambrose (in Luc. lib. ii. n. 23, Oper. t. ii. p. 1560, Migne) says: ‘Elizabeth first heard the voice, but John first felt the grace. . . . The infant rejoiced, the mother was filled likewise with joy. The mother is not filled before the son; but the son being filled with the Holy Ghost, he filled the mother. John rejoiced, and rejoiced the spirit of Mary. While John rejoices, Elizabeth is filled. But Mary is not filled with the Spirit, as we know that her spirit exulted because the incomprehensible was operating incomprehensibly in the mother. Elizabeth is filled after conception, Mary is filled before it.’

St. Cyril (Epist. ad Ægypt. vol. vi. Ep. i. p. 4) says: ‘John, who was still within the womb, when he perceived the voice of Mary, Mother of God, leapt for joy.’

St. Epiphanius (in Panor. lxii. § 5) says: 'While yet in his mother's womb, he perceived that his Lord had come, and he exulted.'

St. Jerome (Or. Catech. iii. 6) says that St. John 'cried out from his mother's womb, "Whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?"'

St. Augustine (Sermo cclxxxix. Oper. t. v. p. 1308, Migne)

FIG. 39.



says: 'Elizabeth conceived a man, Mary likewise: Elizabeth mother of John, Mary mother of Christ. However, Elizabeth was mother only of a man; while Mary was mother of Him who was God and man. It is indeed wonderful that a creature should conceive her Creator. . . . If our first falling

occurred when the woman conceived in her heart the poison of the serpent, it is not to be astonished if our salvation was accomplished when the woman conceived in her womb the flesh of the Omnipotent. Each sex had fallen, and each sex was to be repaired: through a woman we were put in a state of death, through a woman salvation has been given to us.'

St. James, Bishop of Sarug (Abbeloos, Lovian. 1867, p. 189), says that Mary is 'the most blessed amongst all women, as in her the malediction of earth was extirpated, and the sentence of damnation was abolished.'

### 3. *From Christian Archæology.*

To illustrate the mysterious fact of the visitation of our Blessed Lady to Elizabeth, we exhibit four monuments from

FIG. 40.



antiquity. The first (fig. 39) is taken from the catacombs, or Cemetery of St. Julius the Pope, in the Via Flaminia, at Rome, as has been exhibited by Arringhi (tom. ii. lib. iv. cap. xlii. p. 353). It shows the first meeting of Mary with Elizabeth, and their mutual love.

The second (fig. 40) is taken from the ancient door of Pisa.



It is mentioned by Ciampini in his work (*de Antiquis Valvis Æneis Ecclesiæ Pisanæ*, tav. 20), and has the inscription, 'Hectisaba,' that is, 'Salutation to Elizabeth,' or 'Sancta Elizabeth.' The antiquity of the said doors is unknown. The only thing certain is, that they were brought from Jerusalem, or from the Balearic Isles, in the twelfth century.

FIG. 41.



The third (fig. 41) represents both the Annunciation and the Visitation. It is a bas-relief on ivory, in the Cospi Cabinet at Bologna, described by Gori (*Thes. Veter. Diptyc.* vol. iii. p. 272); and also by Agincourt (vol. ii. tom. xii. p. 13).

FIG. 42.



The fourth (fig. 42) is found in St. Mary in Valle, in Cividale of Friuli, belonging to the eighth century, and is mentioned by Mozzoni (*Tavole Cronologiche*, sec. viii.).

SECTION II.

EVIDENCE FROM THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.

*Greek.*—And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and exclaimed with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb; and whence is this to me that the Mother of God should come to me? For behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped with joy.

*Syriac.*—And it happened that Elizabeth having heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped for joy in her womb, and was filled with the Holy Ghost. Then she exclaimed with a loud voice, and said to Mary, Thou art blessed among women, and blessed is the fruit which is in thy womb. And whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant exulted with great joy in my womb.

*Persian.*—When Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant in her womb agitated itself with exultation and liveliness, and in the meantime Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. Hence, with a loud voice she exclaimed and said to Mary, Blessed art thou among women, also blessed is the fruit which is in thy womb. What is that, that the Mother of God should come to me? In the very moment that thy salutation reached my ears, the infant rejoiced with great joy in my womb.

*Arabic.*—Elizabeth having heard the salutation of Mary, the little infant leaped in her womb, and she was filled with the Holy Ghost, and exclaimed with a loud voice, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. How is it that the Mother of God should come to me? For as soon as the voice of thy salutation reached my ears, the babe leaped with joy in my womb.

*Ethiopic.*—And Elizabeth having heard the voice of Mary's salutation, the infant rejoiced in her womb, and the Holy Ghost abounded in Elizabeth, and she exclaimed with a loud

voice and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. What am I, that the Mother of God should come to me? Because, as soon as I heard thy voice saluting me, the infant leaped in my womb with joy and exultation.

There is no need to make any observations upon the above versions of the Bible, as they are perfectly conformable to the Catholic Vulgate. The English versions being likewise conformable, we abstain from producing them here.

### SECTION III.

#### PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

CALVIN, 'An Extract from the Commentary on the Gospels,' by the Rev. W. Pringle (vol. i. p. 48, Edinburgh, 1847), upon the first chapter of St. Luke, says: 'Luke intended to express an extraordinary occurrence. . . . the infant, startled by a secret movement of the Spirit. The expression, "she was filled with the Holy Ghost," means that she was suddenly imbued with the gift of prophecy to an unusual extent; for the gifts of the Spirit had not formerly been wanting in her, but their power appeared more abundant and extraordinary. . . . Mary is justly called blessed, on whom God bestowed the remarkable honour of bringing into the world His own Son. . . . Elizabeth thinks very highly of the favours bestowed by God on Mary, and gives them just commendation.'

Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, 'New Testament' (p. 136, London, 1856), says: 'Elizabeth, the mother, first heard the word; but the infant in her womb first felt the grace.'

Bishop Pearson, 'On the Creed,' Art. III., says: 'She (Mary) is frequently styled the Mother of Jesus in the language of the Evangelists, and by Elizabeth particularly the Mother of her Lord.' Again: 'If Elizabeth cried out with so loud a voice, Blessed art thou among women, when Christ was but newly conceived in her womb; what expressions of honour and admiration can we think sufficient now that Christ is in heaven, and that Mother with Him?'

‘The Annotated Paragraph Bible’ (London, 1857, at the first chapter of St. Luke) says: ‘Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, who not only revealed to her Mary’s condition, but also filled her with joy and reverence to recognise Mary’s offspring as her Lord.’

Doctor Hickes, ‘On the due Praise and Honour of the Virgin Mary’ (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 293), says: ‘There is a particular respect due unto her (Mary) upon account of her eminent graces, and as she is the Mother of God. And so we found that her cousin Elizabeth treated her with a particular respect under that character: “Whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come unto me?”’

Thomas Scott, ‘The Holy Bible’ (Luke i. 44), says: ‘No sooner did Elizabeth hear the voice than she felt the infant leap in her womb in a very extraordinary manner, as if conscious of the presence of the Great Redeemer, whom he was appointed to precede. At the same time Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit; and, under His prophetic influence, she pronounced Mary, and the fruit of her womb, to be most blessed or happy, as peculiarly honoured by the most High God.’

Now if the Holy Ghost, through Elizabeth, proclaimed Mary’s high qualifications, and the same are acknowledged likewise, not only by the holy fathers, but also by those outside the Catholic Church, why is she not to be blessed and venerated by all Christians?

## CHAPTER XII.

FROM THE CANTICLE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN IS DISCOVERED  
THE GRANDEUR OF HER SOUL, AS WELL AS THE AMOUNT  
OF HER DIVINE RICHES, WHICH CLAIM OUR RESPECT AND  
ADMIRATION.

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## SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From Holy Scripture.*

THE *Magnificat*, or the Divine Cantic of the Blessed Virgin, which she pronounced on the occasion of the prophetic salutation of the inspired Elizabeth, is one of the most beautiful songs of the new dispensation, and incomparably superior to any in the Old Testament. Mary by it appears as a divinely inspired prophetess, beholding the past as well as the future, and shows much feeling, joy, and gratitude to God as the Author of all good. Therefore she says: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour; for He hath regarded the lowly state of His hand-maid. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; because He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and Holy be His name. And His mercy is from generation to generation to them that fear Him. He hath shown might in His arm. He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent away empty. He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of his mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever.'

The true meaning of this beautiful canticle, according to the interpretations of the holy fathers, as well as of the commentators and theologians, appears to us to be as follows : 'Thou, O Elizabeth, magnifiest me by calling me by the mighty title of Mother of God, and by celebrating the great favours conferred on me by God. I do magnify and praise God alone, who made me great by operating in me in regard to the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Divine Word. I praise and glorify God with all my soul, with all the faculties of my mind, with all the senses of my body. My intellect does not think of aught save on Him. My memory does not reflect but on Him, my will wishes but what He wishes. My heart loves but Him, or in reference to Him. My desires are only for Him. My mouth does but speak and praise Him. My hand operates not on anything but what belongs to His service. My feet move only to execute His will. Thou Elizabeth magnifiest me for becoming the Mother of God ; but I magnify the most High, who made me what I am. My spirit admires the power, the benignity, and the sanctity of the Son of God, and highly rejoices in Him as the loving fount of all gifts. He being infinitely perfect, looked with benignity and goodness at my lowliness and abjection, and took His humanity from me. On account of such unheard-of benignity on the part of God, all generations henceforth shall call me blessed. He who is omnipotent and most saintly, has wrought in me things the most magnificent and admirable. His mercy, bounty, and liberality will also be experienced in all generations by all those who fear Him and observe His commandments. On the contrary, those who impiously despise Him will experience the severity of His justice. He deprived the mighty of their greatness, and exalted the humble from their lowly state. He gives abundance of graces and glory to the poor in spirit, and sends to be punished those who are proud and rich in the world. He, conformably to the ways of His mercy, raised the people of Israel whom He loved as His children, and made them partakers of the benefit of redemption, as it was promised to Abraham, David, and the rest of the children of Abraham, both Jews and Gentiles.' Such seems to be the meaning of

the Blessed Virgin's Canticle, and from it the grandeur of her soul and the amount of her divine greatness is displayed.

It is to be observed that by those words, 'His mercy is from generation to generation to them that fear Him,' the Blessed Virgin combats and confutes in anticipation both the Pelagian and Lutheran heresies. Pelagius denied the necessity of divine grace, stating that man by his own natural strength, without the gratuitous gift of grace, could operate meritoriously, and deserve eternal life. Such an error is destroyed by those words of Mary, 'His mercy is from generation to generation;' for she does not say our natural force, or our justice, but 'His mercy is from generation to generation;' so that she teaches that the mercy of God is the first reason of all graces conferred upon the issue of Adam from generation to generation, as well as the fount of our sanctity, and of all good works. On the other hand, Luther denied the necessity of good works, affirming that faith alone is sufficient for salvation. Now Mary put down this error by the words, 'to them that fear Him.' She meant to say that divine mercy with its effects extended itself upon the whole issue of Abraham in such a manner that eternal salvation was found through it, not by those who believed only, but by those who feared Him, that is, by those who to faith unite the exercise of good works and the observance of the commandments. Moreover, Mary does not say God has done great things in me, but to me, in order to show that God did not alone do great things in her, but also *to her*, and those things were so great, that God hath shown *might* in His arm. And undoubtedly these things were so great, that neither before, nor after her, were they ever done to any other creature whatever. How beautifully Mary's humility ennobles her dignity, and makes more conspicuous her greatness of heart! How great is the omnipotence of God in giving, and the gratitude of Mary in receiving! How noble and mighty are the sentiments of her soul! It is a creature who speaks, but a divinely inspired creature; it is the Mother of the Son of God, the spouse of the Holy Ghost, the most saintly and supernaturally gifted creature, who, after Christ, is far superior and privileged above all the rest. How worthy, then, is she of our veneration and love!

2. *From the Early Fathers of the Church, as Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

From ecclesiastical history we understand that the Blessed Virgin Mary, on account of her divine graces, has been at all times blessed by all generations, as she foretold in the canticle the *Magnificat*. The Apostles were the first to bless and honour the Virgin Mother of God, and all Christendom followed them, as appears from tradition.

St. Justin Martyr (ii. 136) says: 'Mary having conceived Jesus Christ, both according to the flesh and to the Spirit, it is evident that she must be called blessed.'

St. Basil (tom. i. in cap. viii. Isai. n. 208; or the author of the Comm. in Isaiah) says: 'Nobody can deny that the Blessed Virgin was the prophetess to whom Isaiah alluded, if only attention be made to the *Magnificat*. Every word of this divine song, if attentively examined, shows that she was the prophetess on whom the Holy Ghost descended, and whom the virtue of the Most High covered with His shadow.

St. Ambrose (in Luc. lib. ii. Oper. tom. i. par. 2, p. 1561, Migne) says: 'When the soul magnifies the Lord, it becomes more sublime by participating in His greatness. But in reference to Mary, her prophecy is fuller and more ample in proportion to her dignity and pre-eminence. Nor is it without reason that Elizabeth prophesies before John's, and Mary before Christ's nativity; for the accomplishment of the Redemption of mankind was at hand. Now even as sin began with woman, so good also sprang from woman; in order that woman by giving up works of effeminacy, might renounce her weakness; and the soul, which has no distinction of sex, may, like Mary, who has no stain of sin, scrupulously imitate her purity and chastity.'

St. Jerome (c. Pelag. Dial. i. § 16) says: 'In a field of good land, even from one sowing, there springs up fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, and some a hundred-fold: by the very numbers here given it is shown, that what springs up is unequal, yet each is perfect in its own kind. Elizabeth and Zacharias, whom you Pelagians use as an impenetrable



shield for your doctrine, may teach us how much inferior they are to the Blessed Mary, Mother of the Lord, in sanctity, who from consciousness of the God that dwells within her, freely exclaims: "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed, for He that is mighty hath done great things for me, and holy is His name. . . ." Now observe in this that she calls herself blessed, not by her own merit and virtue, but from the kindness of God that dwelt in her.'

St. James of Sarug (de ejus Vita et Scrip. Abbeloos, Lovian. 1867, p. 249), says: 'Mary, on account of the fruit of her womb, with celestial mind and divine light, exclaimed: "I will be called blessed by all generations;" because she well knew the high position to which she was raised, and therefore her blessedness would be proclaimed with great admiration.'

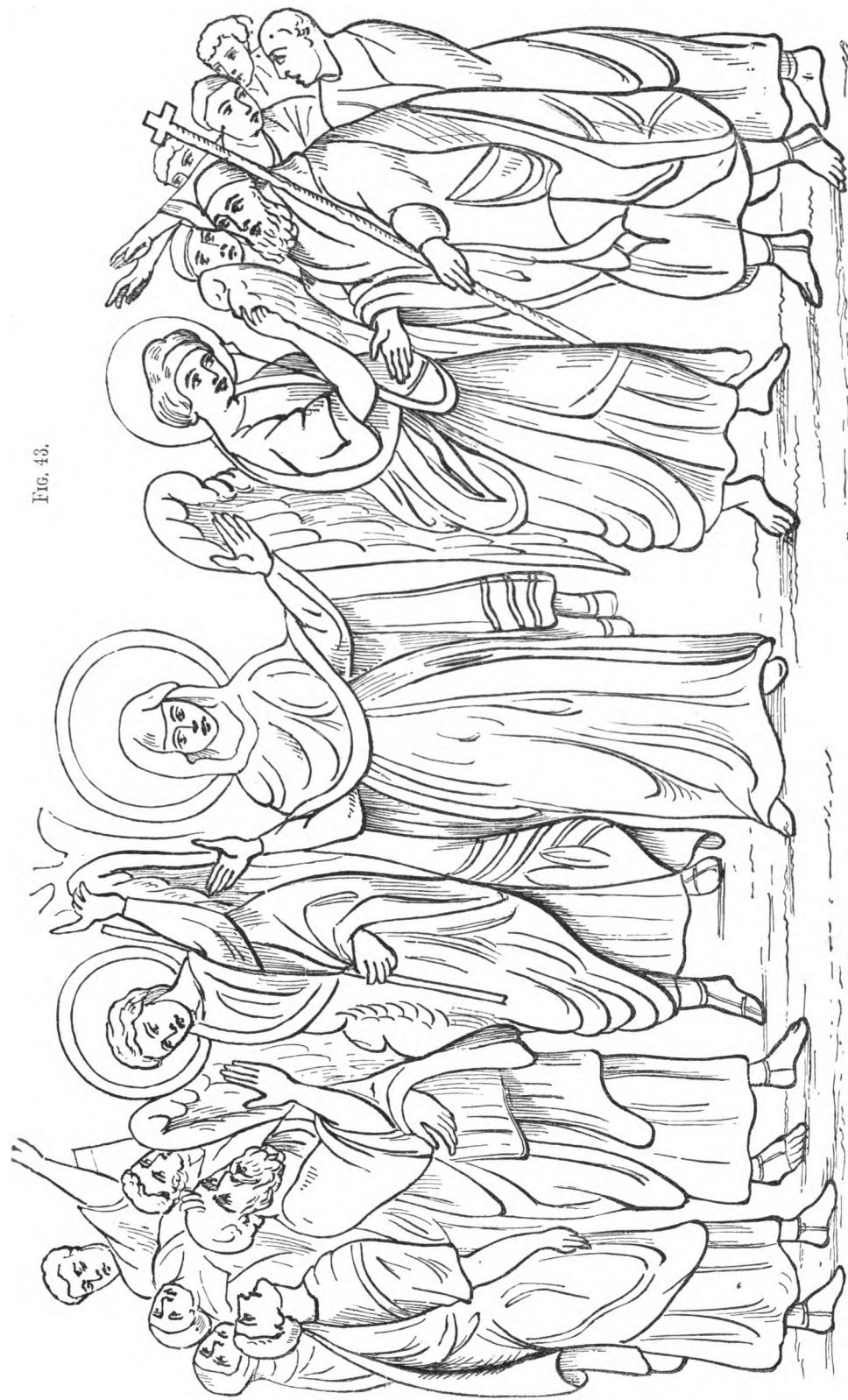
### 3. *From Christian Archæology.*

As in the present chapter no allusion is made to any particular subject, and the greatness and virtues of the Blessed Virgin are only mentioned in a general way, so we bring forward some ancient monuments, not alluding to any particular mystery of her life, but showing only the devotion of our ancestors towards our Blessed Lady. Thus we exhibit in fig. 43, the miniature of a Syriac manuscript of the Bibliotheca of St. Lorenzo of Florence, belonging to the sixth century, representing the Blessed Virgin in the midst of the Apostles, after the ascension of our Divine Redeemer. There are to be seen in it two angels, who seem to endeavour to explain to the Apostles the event that caused them such great surprise. The said miniature is found in the work of Agincourt (vol. vi. tav. 27, fig. 1).

In fig. 44 we exhibit a half-figure of the Blessed Virgin, taken from an old mosaic found in the subterranean Church of St. Peter in Rome, belonging to the eighth century, and referred to by Agincourt (vol. vi. tav. 17).

In fig. 45 we show a painting, published for the first time by the same Agincourt (vol. vi. tav. 10, fig. 11), representing our Blessed Lady, with her Divine Son, and two saints, one at each side, found in the interior of the Church of Saints

Fig. 43.



Cosmas and Damian, in Rome. The same author thinks that such a painting might belong to the sixth century.

In fig. No. 46, we present a mosaic belonging to the eighth

FIG. 44.

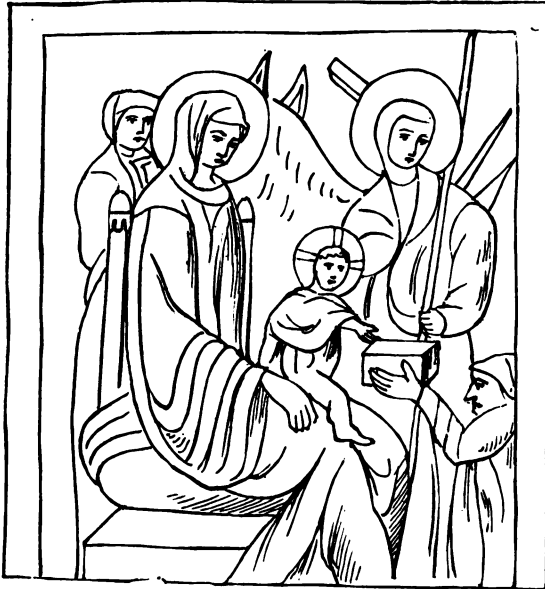


FIG. 45.



century, and exhibited by Agincourt (vol. vi. tav. 17, No. 8), who says on this subject: 'Veneration of the Virgin, and

FIG. 46.



her Son Jesus. A work in mosaic, from which it is evident that it was placed in the Church of St. Peter by Pope John

VII., in the year 705, but since was transferred, in the year 1639, to the Church of St. Mary, in Cosmadin, where it is to be found at present.'

FIG. 47.



The fig. 47 exhibits a mosaic of the Church of Capua, published by Ciampini (part ii. t. liv. p. 167), belonging to the same age of Christianity.

## SECTION II.

EVIDENCE FROM DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE HOLY BIBLE  
UPON THE *MAGNIFICAT*.

ALL translations of the Bible admirably coincide with the Catholic Vulgate in the translations of the *Magnificat*. Hence we will be content by showing only the concordance of verse 49, which shows the great things God operated in Mary, as well as the great honours conferred upon her :—

*Greek*.—Because His powerful and holy name did me great things.

*Syriac*.—He, who is powerful, and His name is holy, did about me magnify.

*Persian*.—He whose name is powerful and holy did great things in me.

*Arabic*.—Because He who is powerful, and whose name is holy, did great things in me.

*Ethiopic*.—He who is strong, and whose name is holy, did me great things.

We have thought proper to show to our readers also the concordance of the following different translations of the said text, as they are to be found in the ‘English Hexapla,’ London, 1841 :—

*Wickliff*, 1380.—For He that is mythe hath don to me greet things.

*Tyndale*, 1534.—For He that is mighty hath done to me greate things.

*Cranmer*, 1539.—Because He that is mighty hath done to me greate things.

*Geneva*, 1557.—Because He that is mighty hath declared towards me wonderful things.

*Rheims*, 1582.—Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me.

*Authorised Version*.—For He that is mighty hath done to me great things.

## SECTION III.

## PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND acknowledges and praises the canticle *Magnificat*, so that in the Order for Evening Prayer it is prescribed to be said.

In the 'Illustration of the Liturgy of the Church of England,' by the Rev. Thomas Pruen (vol. i. London, 1820, p. 535), is said: 'This is the song of the Blessed Virgin, recorded by St. Luke, on the confirmation she received at Elizabeth's house of what the angel had told her, that she should become the Mother of our Lord by the operation of the Holy Ghost. . . . Well might all after ages call her *blessed*, well might they celebrate her memory, the fruit of whose womb was the author of eternal salvation; well might they admire her as a pattern of true meekness and piety and purity of manners: but further than this we dare not go. . . . This is the very first hymn in the New Testament, and may be reckoned the first-fruits of the Spirit, and therefore it hath been anciently used among Christians, and is received to this day into the service of all reformed churches of Holland and Germany, as well as ours, where it is placed very fitly after the first lesson at evening prayer, in which are usually set forth those acts of God's gracious providence over the pious, and those prophecies and promises of a Saviour to come, which this hymn doth praise the Lord for.' (Comber.)

Bishop Pearson, 'On the Creed' (Art. III. p. 178, London, 1692), says: 'In respect of her (Mary), it was necessary that we might perpetually preserve an esteem of her person proportionable to so high a dignity. It was her own prediction, "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed;" but the obligation is ours to call her, to esteem her so.'

Bishop Bull, 'On the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin' (Catholic Safeguards, London, 1851, p. 259), says: 'Throughout this excellent song the Sacred Virgin expresses a deep sense of her own unworthiness, and upon that account a

profound gratitude for the singular favour of the Almighty bestowed on her. Her *Magnificat* is not a magnifying of herself, but of the Lord. For thus it begins: "My soul doth magnify the Lord,"—not myself, who am but a poor unworthy handmaid of the Lord, but the Lord Himself, Who hath so highly dignified and advanced me, though unworthy. She first sings in the lowest and deepest note of humility, and then raiseth her song to the highest strain of gratitude and thanksgiving, admiring the transcendent honour to which by the goodness of God she was exalted.' The same (p. 264) adds: 'All generations—that is, all those generations that from henceforth to the end of the world shall believe on that Jesus Who shall be born of me—shall call me blessed; that is, shall acknowledge and proclaim me to be the most blessed and happy among women, congratulating the singular grace and favour of God vouchsafed to me.'

Dr. Hickes, 'On the due Praise and Honour of the Virgin Mary' (Catholic Safeguards, London, 1851, p. 290), says: 'In her *Magnificat*, which she delivered upon the salutation of her cousin Elizabeth, she admires and adores the infinite condescension of God to her low state. And truly the signal honour which God did her, in choosing her for the Mother of His Son, is an argument, according to the Scriptures, that she was lowly in mind as well as lowly in fortune, for "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the lowly" (Prov. iii. 34). And this being the usual method of God's proceedings with the sons of men, we may conclude that the Virgin Mary was a very meek and humble maid, because God exalted her above her fellows.'

Dr. Wordsworth, 'New Testament' (London, 1816, p. 137), commenting upon verse 48 of the *Magnificat*, 'Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid, for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed,' says: 'Not for my virtue, but because God hath done great things for me.'

Luther himself (vol. i. p. 477, a. p. 499, edit. Jene), having to explain the *Magnificat*, exclaims: 'Oh, may this tender Mother of God vouchsafe to obtain for me the inspiration and help by which I may be able to explain clearly and usefully her

beautiful canticle ! May she also vouchsafe to intercede for your serene highness at the throne of the Most High, in order that God may grant you His grace, and to us all a knowledge, and a wholesome lesson of morality ; and render us also worthy to sing an *eternal Magnificat* to His praise in the abode of the blessed. May God grant us His grace ! Amen.'



## CHAPTER XIII.

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SON OF GOD BOTH TO THE JEWS AND GENTILES, AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT BETHLEHEM, HAVING BEEN OPERATED THROUGH THE AGENCY OF MARY, SHE IS ENTITLED TO THE VENERATION AND GRATITUDE OF ALL CHRISTENDOM.

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SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From Holy Scripture.*

THE precinct of Bethlehem had witnessed the accomplishment of the most tender and loving mystery of Christ's religion. St. Luke (ii. 16) says: 'They (the shepherds of Bethlehem) came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in a manger.' And St. Matthew (ii. 11), relating the visit of the Magi, says: 'Entering into the house, they found the young child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored Him.' This twofold evangelical fact enables us to consider the united agency of Mary with Jesus in the merciful design of the manifestation of the expected Messiah, the Son of God, and the establishment of His Church. That the Jews, united with the Gentiles at Bethlehem in the adoration of the Messiah, gave birth to the Church of Christ, suitable to all nations and people, has been observed by St. Ambrose, saying, 'Behold the beginning of the rising Church' ('Videte nascentis Ecclesiæ exordium'). But through whom is the manifestation of the Son of God made? Through whom does the Church of Christ commence its existence? It was through Mary the Mother of the Infant Son of God. He had taken on Himself our infr-

mity, and adopted our weakness; He could not either stand or speak; Mary therefore was obliged to support Him, to be His interpreter, explain to others His will, and become the voice of the eternal Word. Hence St. Luke (ii. 18) relates that 'all that heard (viz. the shepherds) wondered;' and (ver. 20) 'the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen.' But from whom did they hear it? Was it not from Mary? Therefore it was through the ministry of Mary that her Divine Son was presented first to the Jewish nation, and spoke to them. It was also Mary that afterwards made Jesus Christ known to the Gentiles, as has been observed by St. Ambrose (in Epiph. Dom. Sermon. xii. App. t. ii. p. 627, Migne), saying: 'The Mother presented Him to the adoration of the Magi.' The Son of God in Mary's arms having received the first adorations of the faithful, and through her having spoken to them, she therefore is not only the Mother of the Divine Word, but she is also His first minister, His apostle, and preacher of the New Covenant. She by giving Jesus a mortal life, gives Him also a spiritual life in the souls of the Jews, as well as the Gentiles. Hence, if the Church of Christ began, and Jesus Christ was acknowledged by the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, as true man and true God, the long-expected Redeemer, the Saviour of mankind, it was through Mary. And Mary being the first evangelist and the first apostle of her Divine Son, was deservedly entitled to be called by the Church 'Queen of the Apostles.'

She is acknowledged to be also the type of the true Church of God, as has been observed by St. Augustine (Sermon. clxxxvi. Oper. t. v. par. i. p. 1064, Migne), saying: 'The Church is a virgin and brings forth children. She herein imitates Mary, who brought forth the Lord. Did not Mary give birth to Him, and remain a virgin? So the Church brings forth, and still is a virgin. The Church gives birth to Christ, because those who are baptized are His members. *You are, says the Apostle, the body of Christ and members of the member.* If then the Church gives birth to the members of Christ, it is like Mary.' And the same holy father (Sermon. excii. Oper. t. v. p. 1012, Migne) says: 'You being members of

Christ, belong to the childbirth of the Virgin. Mary brought forth your Head, and you have been brought forth by the Church, which is also a mother and virgin ; viz. it is mother on consideration of its bowels of charity, and it is a virgin on account of its integrity in faith and piety. The Church brings forth people who are members of the only One, whose it is body and spouse ; and also in this the Church is acting like the Virgin, being in many children mother of unity.' And the same (Lib. de Virginit. c. vi. Oper. t. vi. p. 399, Migne) adds : ' Mary is the Mother of His members, who we are, because she through charity jointly effected that faithful should be born in the Church.' Mary therefore, being the type of the Church of Christ her Son, acted at Bethlehem conformably to her mission, so that while the Divine Redeemer by His inward grace enlightened the minds and moved the hearts both of the Jews and the Magi, through Mary they were instructed in the truths of religion, the principles of Christianity, the mysteries of faith. On this account the commentator Cornelius a Lapide (in Matt. ii.) says : ' There is no doubt that the Magi spoke with Mary, and that they knew from her the way by which Jesus Christ was conceived and born, and therefore they adored Christ as the Son of God.' Hence, through the agency of Mary, as the type of the Church, mother of unity and charity, the Magi, as well as the shepherds, went away already made Christians, professing Christianity, preaching Jesus Christ, and venerating and praising Mary's divine maternity.

Besides, the mystery of the *divine virginal childbirth* accomplished in Mary is also calculated to combat all ancient heresies. These indeed generally tended to deny either the divinity or the humanity of Jesus Christ ; and Mary in Bethlehem, with her Divine Infant in her arms, confutes fully the twofold monster of heresy, since in her capacity of a Virgin-Mother she shows the divinity of Jesus Christ, and by the conception of Christ from her substance is shown His humanity. Indeed St. Cyril, against Nestorius (Labbe. Concil. Ephes. p. 55), says : ' If the incarnation of the Word is not true, and the Virgin is not truly the Mother of God, it follows that the Word did not take the seed of Abraham,

nor the same Word who proceeds from God the Father has been made like His brethren, nor Mary is Deipara; and therefore the cause of our salvation fails, our faith breaks, and together with it falls down the hope of mankind.' And St. Archelaus (apud Mockler, *Patrologia* of the First Three Centuries), a disciple of Origen, in a dispute against Manes, who denied the nativity of Jesus Christ from a woman, observed: 'If it be true, as you maintain, that Christ has not been born, it follows that He did not suffer; if He did not suffer, the very name of cross must be cancelled; the cross being annulled, it follows that Jesus did not rise from death; but if Jesus did not rise from death, nobody shall rise again; and if this be so, there shall be no more a judgment. How, indeed, can I be judged as a man, if I take no body through the resurrection? If there shall be no judgment, the commandments of God shall not be observed, and so there shall be no check to men's passions. All these things come as a natural consequence from denying that Jesus Christ is born from Mary. On the contrary, if you confess the nativity of Jesus Christ from Mary, His passion follows; to the passion succeeds the resurrection; and to this the judgment. Thus all the precepts of the Holy Scripture are saved. This is, therefore, a question of no small importance, and pregnant with a thousand consequences, and so the whole of our hopes depends upon the childbirth of the Blessed Virgin.' St. Ignatius the Martyr, in the fragments of his letters which still remain, says: 'In Jesus Christ there is flesh and divinity (ad Eph. i. 7); the former taken from Mary, the latter coming from God (vi. c. 18). He was brought by the womb of Mary as it was decreed by God, and is of the lineage of David, and of the flesh of Mary, from whom He has been born. He really ate and drank, and suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was crucified and died (ad Trallian. c. 9); so that the invisible has become visible, and the impassible has become passible, through love for us.'

Now, being foretold by Isaiah that the sign of the coming of the Son of God, the Emmanuel, should be His being born from a virgin, and Jesus Christ being truly born from the Virgin Mary, through a miracle, it follows that He is God; so that

the virginity of His Mother shows the divinity of the Son. On the other hand, it being proved that our Saviour took human flesh from His virgin mother, it follows that He is truly a man. Hence St. James, Bishop of Sarug (Abbeloos de Vita et Scrip. S. Jac. Loviani, 1867, p. 285), says: 'Christ in His nativity is God and Man, as Mary is truly virgin and mother.' Therefore Mary from Bethlehem offering to the world the mystery of the divine virginal child-birth, confounds all those who deny either the divinity or the humanity of Jesus Christ, and teaches mankind that her Son is true God, being from eternity generated by the Father, and that He is also true man, having taken flesh from her virginal womb, so that in the same flesh which He received from her, the God-Man suffered and was sacrificed on the cross for our eternal salvation.

Moreover, in this mystery an essential requisite of Christianity is discovered, namely, that the Church of Christ should be born and brought up in *humility*. To this end the Son of God humbled Himself even to take human flesh, to be born in a stable, and placed in a manger. His mother likewise was humble in her social position, no less than in her heart. His reputed father, in like manner, was humble both in his inward and outward life. Moreover, our Saviour wished to be acknowledged and adored as God in the first instance by humble shepherds, and after by the higher classes, who made captive and humbled their intellect to the obsequiousness of faith. This plainly shows that in the order of Providence supernatural truths are only revealed to those who are poor in spirit and humble of heart, so that simplicity and humility are the only means by which we can arrive at the true knowledge, and be enabled to embrace the truth. Indeed, the sign given by the angel to the shepherds to know the God-Man was this (Luke ii. 12): 'You shall find the Infant wrapped up in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.' Jesus Christ, therefore, by manifesting Himself to them under the form of an infant, in such an humble state, meant to teach all Christians that they must become as children, both by will and election, so as to imitate children by simplicity of faith and humility of heart; so much so, that

humility should be the foundation of His religion, and an essential requisite to know and embrace it. As pride is the principal obstacle to embrace truth, so the first disposition that the grace of faith requires in the soul of such as are outside the Church, is the spirit of humility. Hence our Saviour (Matt. ii. 25), turning Himself to His heavenly Father, says: 'Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.' 'Humility,' says St. Augustine, 'is the foundation of religion and of true sanctity.' Mary was the most humble among all children of Adam, and for it she became the most perfect believer, and was above all exalted. We cannot refrain from quoting on this particular a beautiful passage of St. James of Sarug (J. B. Abbeloos de Vit. et Scrip. St. Jacobi, Loviani, 1867, p. 215), which runs as follows: 'As there had been nobody so humble as Mary, so she was exalted above all. God grants splendour in proportion of humility, and He having made Mary His mother, who is found like her in humility? Had it been another more pure and meek, God would have inhabited her, leaving Mary alone; and if there had been a soul more shining and holy than her, He would have elected this in preference to Mary. The Son of God having to descend on this earth, looked at all women, and chose Mary because of her eminence above all in beauty. Having investigated in her, He found in her both humility and sanctity, as well as pure affections, and a soul inflamed with love of God, besides a clean heart, and her thoughts straight to perfection: hence He elected her as the most pure, and adorned with all kinds of virtues. He set out from His region to take abode in that most glorious woman, to whom did not exist the like in the world. She was alone humble, pure, and without spot, and consequently no other than she was worthy to become Mother of God.'

Moreover, the Church of Jesus Christ had not only its beginning, but also its progress and propagation, from Mary. We read in the Acts of the Apostles (c. i.), that the apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ, after the ascension of our Saviour, were persevering in prayer 'with Mary the Mother of Jesus.' She, after being the agent of the first establish-

ment of the Church, remained a private mistress and teacher of the Church, instructing it by her wisdom, edifying it by her good example, and sustaining it by her zeal and a spirit of continual prayer. We abstain from quoting here evidences of Mary's agency in the propagation of Christ's Church, as they may be found in Chapters VII. and IX., and elsewhere.

In conclusion, a Christian who finds himself out of the pale of the Catholic Church, ought to consider that the Church of Jesus Christ came into existence at Bethlehem, the house of bread, the mystical bread which feeds and satiates the human mind and heart with the true doctrine and knowledge of God, and takes away the appetite of falsehood. It was there that both the Jew and the Pagan, having eaten that salubrious bread, which is now dispensed by the Catholic Church, went back to their homes enlightened, converted, and put in the path of salvation. But it must not be forgotten that Mary was the agent in the house of the mystical bread; it was she that showed Jesus to them; it was through Mary that Jesus was offered to their adoration; and it was through Mary that Jesus spoke to them words of eternal life. Hence it seems that the best means to find the grace of the Son is to go to Him through the Mother. On His Mother's knees, taking nourishment from her, He is found, as, according to the Gospel, it was the case with the first believers: 'They found Mary and the infant.' (Luke ii. 16.)

## 2. *From the Early Fathers of the Church, as Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

St. Ephrem (Rhythm the first, Morris, Select Works, p. 2) says: 'To Eve our mother birth a man gave, who had had no birth himself. How much more should Eve's daughter be believed to have borne a child without a man! The Virgin bare to-day the Adam that was Head over heaven.'

St. Ambrose (Sermo xi. de Epiph. Appendix, tom. ii. p. 626, Migne), speaking of David, says that he exulted, 'foreseeing in spirit that through Mary the Church had to become the spouse of Jesus Christ.' And the same holy father, or the author of the Exposition on the Apocalypse (Appendix in

Apoc. tom. ii. p. 876, Migne), says: 'Mary is the Mother of the Church, because she brought forth Him who is the Head of the Church.' The same holy father adds: 'The personality of the shepherds is not despicable. Indeed, the more despicable a thing is to human prudence, the more precious it is to divine faith. God did not search the gymnasiums of the learned, but He looked to the simple-minded, who are unskilful in magnifying and adorning what they hear; because it is not ambition, but simplicity, that is desired.' He also says: 'Let it be observed that the shepherds hastened, because no one finds Christ by idleness.'

St. Jerome (Ep. ad Paul. et Eust. Oper. tom. xi. p. 126, edit. Migne) says that Mary 'gave glory to heaven, and the Saviour to the earth; she spread peace, conferred faith on the Gentiles, diminished vice, gave order to life, and established the rule of action.'

St. Leo (in Nat. Dom. vi. Oper. t. i. p. 213, Migne) says: 'To-day the Author of the world came out from the virginal womb, and He who created all nature has become the Son of her whom He created. To-day the Word of God appeared clothed with flesh, so that He who never had been visible to human eyes, began to be tractable also by the hands.' And the same (Serm. i. de Epiph.) says: 'Jesus Christ wanted to be known by all, because He was designed to be born for all.' And the same saint (ibid.) adds: 'Let us acknowledge in the Magi who adored Christ, the first-fruits of our vocation and faith, and let us celebrate joyfully the beginning of our hope, as by it we began to enter into our inheritance.' And the same says that the Magi offered to Jesus 'myrrh as to a true man, gold as to a true king, and frankincense as to a true God; and thereby they expressly venerated in the unity of His Divine Person both the Divine and Human nature, which they believed in their hearts, and outwardly showed by their gifts.'

Eucherius (Hom. ii. de Nat. Dom.) says: 'The Creator is born from His creature, who remaining incorrupt, admires the fruit of her womb. A woman becomes the author of her Author.'

St. Cyril of Alexandria (Hom. i. cont. Nestor.), turning



himself to the Blessed Virgin, says: 'It was through thee that all idolaters were converted to the knowledge of the truth. Through thee only the Begotten Son of God, the true light, shone on those who were buried in the darkness and in the shadow of death.'

St. Gregory Nazianzen (Serm. xxxi. *Encycl. Theol.* t. xxi. p. 1248, Migne) says: 'Jesus Christ comes into this world: give Him glory, my brethren. He descends from heaven; go to meet Him. He humbles Himself so much as to come to this earth; rise, ye people, who inhabit the earth, and sing the praises of God. Jesus Christ showing Himself clothed with a body, discovers fear and joy: fear, on account of sin, which obliges Him to such an humiliation; joy, because He comes to operate our redemption. Jesus Christ is born from a virgin. Women, respect virginity, if you like to be the mothers of Jesus Christ. . . . Sin made us to fall from our primitive dignity; the Divine Incarnation has rehabilitated us to all our rights.'

FIG. 48.



He is receiving the adoration of the Magi. This was a memorial of the primitive Christians, showing by it that they had received the gift of faith from Jesus, through Mary, and also that the establishment of His Church took place through the united agency of Mary with Jesus.

### 3. *From Christian Archaeology.*

Among the most eminent effigies of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is frequently found that of her holding in her hands the Divine Child, while

To give a proof of it, we exhibit by fig. 48, a sarcophagus found in the Cemetery of Callistus, illustrated by Arringhi (tom. i. lib. iii. cap. xxii. p. 615). In this monument we see at the same time represented both the nativity of Jesus and the adoration of the Magi, the first of whom indicates with his right hand the star, saying, 'Vidimus et venimus.'

FIG. 49.



St. Joseph is situated behind the Blessed Virgin. There are also the ox and ass, in which, according to the observation of Origen (in Luc. Hom. iii. Oper. S. Jerom. t. vii. p. 246, Migne), is to be acknowledged, the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah (i. 3): 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his

FIG. 50.



master's crib; but Israel hath not known me, and my people had not understood.'

In fig. 49 we exhibit another sarcophagus, excavated near the Church of St. Sebastian, outside the walls of Rome, and found in the work of Arringhi (tom. i. lib. iii. cap. xxii. p. 67), as well as in that of Bianchini (tom. ii. sec. i. lib. iii); and in this is shown the Divine Infant with Mary, Joseph, the

Magi, the ox and the ass, and the star stopping under the roof of the stable.

Fig. 50 shows another sarcophagus, taken from the Ceme-

FIG. 51.



tery of Priscilla, Via Salaria, and related by Bianchini in the above work, No. 28 ; and by Agincourt, vol. ii. pl. vii. n. 6. In this likewise is represented both the coming of the Magi, and

FIG. 52.



the star. The young man behind the Blessed Virgin, indicating the star, seems to be the Prophet Isaias, rather than St. Joseph, as in other ancient monuments.

In fig. 51 is exhibited the picture of the vessel of metal

sent by St. Gregory the Great to Queen Teodolinda, in which are to be seen the Magi, the shepherds, the star, and below the sheepfold, overjoyed on account of the coming of the Messiah. There is also the inscription **EMMANOYHA MEΘIMWNOΘC**, that is, *Emmanuel nobiscum Deus*. It is taken from Mazzoni (Tav. Cron. § vii.).

Fig. 52 shows the Blessed Virgin in the middle of the Apostles, as their queen, praying with them, as exhibited by Bianchini (tab. ii. sec. i.), and in the work 'Roma Sotteranea,' tav. 68, and found in the Cemetery of Priscilla. As by the four preceding wood-cuts is indicated the influence of the Blessed Virgin in the establishment of the Church, so this last is calculated to show her influence in the progress of the same.

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## SECTION II.

### PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

BISHOP BULL 'On the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin' (Catholic Safeguards, p. 269), says: 'We testify our assent to, and complacency in, those singular favours that God bestowed on her (Mary), and together with her we finally return the praise and glory of all to God alone.'

Dr. Hickes, 'On the due Praise and Honour of the Virgin Mary' (Catholic Safeguards, p. 292), says: 'Wheresoever the gospel is preached, that which she (Mary) hath done and suffered for our Lord, ought to be spoken of as a memorial of her from whom He took that very body which was crucified, that precious blood which was shed for the remission of our sins.'

Bishop Pearson, 'The Creed' (Art. iii. p. 181, London, 1692), says: 'The Saviour of the world was born of a woman under the law, without the least pretence of any original corruption, that He might deliver us from the guilt of sin; born of that Virgin who was of the house and lineage of David, that He might sit upon his throne and rule for evermore. And in this latitude I profess to believe Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary.'

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE UNPARALLELED EXAMPLE OF THE SON OF GOD'S SUBJECTION TO MARY FOR THIRTY YEARS, WAS CALCULATED BOTH TO PROMOTE THE HONOUR OF HIS MOTHER, AND TO CONFOUND THE PRIDE OF THOSE WHO OBJECT TO PAY HER VENERATION AND LOVE.

## SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

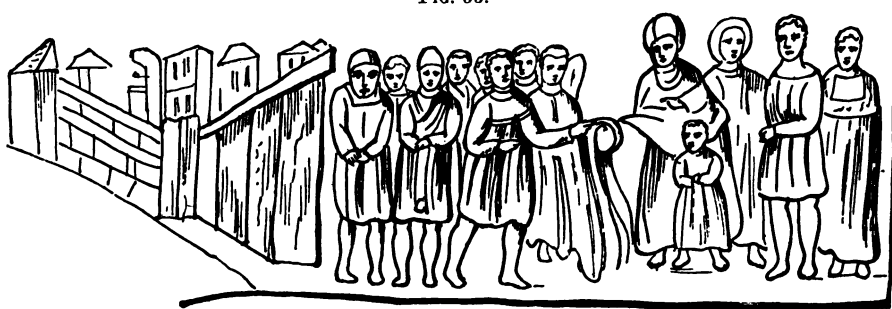
1. *From Holy Scripture.*

IN the Gospel of St. Luke (ii. 51) we read that our Blessed Saviour, after his dispute with the doctors in Jerusalem, 'went down with them (Mary and Joseph), and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.' As Jesus Christ began the public preaching of the Gospel only at the thirtieth year of His age, so He remained under the subjection of Mary and Joseph, ruled by them, for the space of thirty years. This wonderful fact is calculated to give us the most beautiful and interesting lessons of Christian piety. In the first place, we learn that it was to inspire us with feelings of humility and veneration towards His Blessed Mother, that He humbled Himself even to conceal His divinity, and all His splendour, and become the servant of His servants. Indeed, Mary and Joseph were the servants of the Son of God; He had been their Creator, and He was their legitimate Sovereign and Master; nevertheless, He wanted to exercise under their direction and obedience, the laborious, humiliating office of a servant. That same Omnipotent God who by one *fiat* was the Maker of the universe, does not refuse to exercise the low and fatiguing profession of a carpenter! What

a reproach to those who are so proud as to refuse to subject themselves to any humiliating office ! What encouragement to those who exercise themselves in low employment for charity's sake ! What comfort to those who are obliged to get daily support by hard and painful occupation ! According to the principles of faith, they may feel proud to exercise some humiliating office like that of Jesus, as by it they become like to the Son of God, and partaker in His merits.

Moreover, our Blessed Saviour by His divine example teaches us how great is the dignity and power of His Mother Mary, since He was pleased to render to her His personal services, His entire submission and dependence, His perfect attention to all her wishes, and to be ruled by

FIG. 53.



her in His exterior actions. By all this He gave us to understand what is our duty towards Mary, our loving spiritual mother. Indeed, if the Son of God had no objection to humble Himself before Mary, to obey her, and to be guided by her, how inconsistent and shameful it is for a Christian to object to honour and venerate her ! Surely such a Christian cannot consider himself to be superior in wisdom, or more wise, than the Son of God, in refusing to Mary the honour, the veneration, and love exhibited to her by Jesus Christ Himself. Hence a Christian, far from thinking it degrading to honour and venerate Mary, must, on the contrary, consider it to be a great honour and felicity to be permitted to have a share in the veneration and love of that exalted and holy creature whom the very Son of God so much respected and loved.

2. *From the Early Fathers of the Church, as Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

St. Basil (Const. Monast. cap. iv.) says : ' Jesus was subject to them, and showed His obedience also in undertaking all works. Therefore, let children learn how they must be subject to their parents.'

St. Augustine (Serm. lxxiii. de Temp.) says : ' Children must be subject to their parents, in consideration that though

FIG. 54.



Jesus Christ had all the world subject to Him, nevertheless He subjected Himself to His parents.'

St. Ambrose, upon this subject, says : ' Jesus would not have been Master of truth if He had not shown this office of piety.'

St. Jerome (Ep. cxvii. Oper. tom. i. p. 954, Migne) says : ' Our Lord Jesus was subject to his parents. He venerated His mother, of whom He was the Father. He respected His nourisher, whom He Himself nourished. He remembered the womb and the arms by which He was carried.'

3. *From Christian Archæology.*

To show the obedience of Jesus Christ to Mary and Joseph, by going with them to Nazareth after the dispute He had with the doctors in Jerusalem, as is related in the above

text of St. Luke, 'He went down with them and came to Nazareth,' we exhibit, by fig. 53, a portion of the mosaic, already mentioned, of the Roman Liberian Basilica, made in the fourth century, described by Bianchini (*Hist. Eccl. sec. iv. tav. 2*).

We add also two more monuments, taken from Ciampini (*de Antiquis Valvis Portæ Pisanae, cap. vi. tav. 20*), which belonged to the ancient doors of Pisa, the date of which, though uncertain, may be presumed to be the eighth century.

FIG. 55.



The first represents the presentation of Jesus Christ in the Temple, fig. 54.

The other, fig. 55, shows the flight of Jesus Christ with Mary and Joseph into Egypt.

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## SECTION II.

EVIDENCE FROM THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE UPON  
THE ALLEGED TEXT OF THE VULGATE.

*Greek*.—He was subject (*subditus*) to them.

*Syriac*.—And He was subject (*subjectus*) to them.

*Persian*.—And He was obsequious to them (*in obsequio illorum erat*).

*Arabic*.—And He was subject (*subjectus*) to them.

*Ethiopic*.—And He was subject (*subjectus*) to them.



*English Translations.*

Wicliff, 1380.—And was subject to them.

Tyndale, 1534.—And was obedient to them.

Cranmer, 1539.—And was subject unto them.

Authorised Version, 1611.—And was subject unto them.

*Other Translations.*

Geneva, 1557.—And was obedient to them.

Geneva, 1582.—And was subject to them.

There is no need to observe, that all the above translations perfectly agree with the Catholic Vulgate, and show likewise the subjection of Jesus Christ to His Mother.

## SECTION III.

## PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

IN the 'Annotated Paragraph Bible' (London, 1857) we read: 'He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. The wise and holy Child Jesus here presents to the young a pattern of humble docility, earnest diligence in acquiring knowledge, and ready obedience to paternal authority.'

John Calvin, 'A new translation,' by the Rev. W. Pringle (1847, vol. i. p. 171): '*And He was subject to them.* It was for our salvation that Christ took upon Himself this lowly state. So the Lord, Head of Angels, voluntarily became subject to mortal creatures. Such was the purpose of God, that Christ should remain for some time under a shadow, bearing the name of Joseph. Though this subjection on the part of Christ arose from no necessity which He could not have avoided, yet, as He had taken upon Himself human nature, on the condition of being subject to parents, and had assumed the character both of man and of a servant, with respect to the office of Redeemer this was his lawful condition. Thus the more cheerfully ought we, on account of

this, to bear the burden which the Lord has been pleased to place on us.'

Thomas Scott, 'The Holy Bible' (vol. iii. commenting upon chap. ii. v. 51 of St. Luke), says: 'He went down to Nazareth, and was subject in everything not only to Mary, but also to Joseph; and it is reported that He had to earn His livelihood by working as a carpenter in making ploughs and yokes till His entrance on His public ministry.'

## CHAPTER XV.

THE FIRST PUBLIC MIRACLE WROUGHT BY OUR SAVIOUR AT THE WEDDING FEAST, AT THE SOLE REQUEST OF HIS MOTHER, SHOWS BOTH HER INFLUENCE WITH THE SON, AND THE INCLINATION OF THE SON TO GRANT GRACES IN FAVOUR OF MARY'S CLIENTS.

## SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From Holy Scripture.*

BEFORE entering into the subject, we think it proper to give an idea of what a miracle is. A miracle is termed either a derogation from a constant law of nature, or a suspense or change of the same law of nature obtained beyond natural means. Again, it is an effect without its immediate and natural cause, or altogether above natural causes. The existence of a Supreme Being once admitted, who is the omnipotent Creator of all things, Author of all laws which direct nature, and who is the unique and absolute Moderator of all limited existences, it follows that He can, when He pleases, and in the manner most pleasing to Himself, change or suspend the fixed natural order of things. The law of nature, according to St. Augustine, is the natural order of things as fixed by the will of God. Now if God by a free act of His will could create every thing which now exists, and if He can continue the same creation by keeping in the normal state what He has created, it follows that He is able also to modify by a second act the effect of the creating and conserving action. Undoubtedly, according to our manner

of thinking, it is easier to change a thing, alter its qualities, and develope in it new forces, than to take it out of nothing. Indeed, by the creative act, God produced that which was not; but by the second miraculous act, He only transforms what already exists. By the creative act He built upon nothing; but by the second miraculous act, He only works upon what is already in existence. He who can do what is more difficult may, of course, do what is less difficult. Hence, if the creation and conservation of the world, though more difficult, was effected by God, why may He not be able to effect a temporary alteration, or removal of some link of the great chain of natural causes and effects? This is exactly what Jesus Christ did by working the miracle of the conversion of water into wine. He changed the nature of the water, giving to it the quality of wine—from water making wine. That same liquid which till that moment had had the quality of water, began to have the property of wine. He suspended on that occasion the law inherent to the substance of water, and gave to water the law belonging to the substance of wine. And this was a true and real miracle, because such a suspension of the natural property of water, and the changing of it into the natural property of wine, was a deviation from the constant natural law inherent to water, and a change of the same law, which was operated by Jesus Christ beyond natural means. This miracle alone would be sufficient to show the divinity of Jesus Christ, as it is only God who can independently work true miracles. However, the Gospel is full of the like and greater miracles, worked likewise by Jesus Christ in the presence of hundreds and thousands of people; viz. the multiplication of bread to feed at one time five thousand men with five loaves, and at another time four thousand men with seven loaves; the healing of a man thirty-eight years ill of the palsy; the giving of sight to a man born blind; the curing of all manner of diseases; the raising to life the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus four days after his death. After this, how can a man who has not lost his reason, say that Jesus Christ had not worked true miracles? Anyone who would maintain such an impious and absurd doctrine, should be obliged to show

us in what consists the secret of multiplying bread, giving sight to the blind, raising the dead to life, and curing diseases. Till such secrets are revealed, we are in possession of the truths of the miracles performed by Jesus Christ to show His divinity as well as the divinity of the Christian religion preached by Him. But we must return to the miracle of turning water into wine, and hear the narration of it according to the Gospel.

In the Gospel of St. John (ii. 1, *et seq.*) mention is made of the said miracle in the following words: 'There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was there; and Jesus was also invited, and His disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him, They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her, Woman, what is it to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come. His Mother saith to the waiters, Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them, Fill the waterpots with water, and they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them, Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was—but the waiters knew who had drawn the water—the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him, Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.'

Now this passage of the Gospel is sufficient to form a criterion of the power of Mary upon the heart of Jesus, and how graces may be easily obtained through her intercession.

In the first place it is to be considered that it was to please His beloved Mother that Jesus Christ altered even the established order of Providence. This appears from His answer to Mary, when He said to her, 'My hour is not yet come;' that is to say, 'the time fixed by my Father to work miracles has not yet come;' or, better, 'the time for working

miracles established by Me with my Father, has not yet arrived; nevertheless, to meet the desire of my Mother, I will alter this time and work the miracle.' It is to be observed that such a decree was not absolute, but under the condition of not working miracles unless His Mother wished the contrary; but she having wished the contrary, the decree took place in its conditional part, and the order of Providence was accordingly altered. From this it appears that the power of Mary was so great upon the heart of Jesus Christ as to make Him change, as it were, the first order of His Providence. Indeed, the evidence of the fact shows that it was so. Upon this subject St. Augustine observes (Confess. lib. i. c. i.): 'God changes His works, but not His will (*Opera mutat, non mutat consilium*). As the sun does not change its action with regard to the planets, but the planets change their action with regard to the sun, so God wishes eternally what He desires: He wishes eternally the general order and plan of nature, and at the same time He wishes eternally certain exceptions in the same plan.' Therefore Jesus Christ as God wished eternally that exception in the order of nature; viz. that the water should be changed into wine at the request of His beloved Mother.

However, to form a just idea of the power of Mary upon the heart of Jesus, it is worthy of observation that the miracle was not wrought at her prayer or supplication, but only and simply at her desire, as has been observed by the fathers of the Church, SS. Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Cyril, and it is clear from the words of the above text: 'the Mother of Jesus said to Him, they have no wine.' The want of it only was stated, and nothing else was added. Therefore even a simple desire of Mary is granted by Jesus.

Next it is to be observed that Jesus Christ till that time had worked no public miracle, so that it is clear that the first miracle He wrought was entirely to please His Mother, and by doing so, our Blessed Saviour gave all future generations to understand that Mary was the blessed one who above all others was the most deserving to have the first public manifestation of omnipotence performed at her request. The words, indeed, of Jesus Christ, 'My hour is not yet

come,' were only an intimation that the time fixed by Him to work miracles had not yet arrived; still, to meet His Mother's desire, He would do it. Hence Cornelius a Lapide, following the authority of Chrysostom and Theophylact, introduces Jesus Christ as saying, 'My hour is not yet come, because I have fixed to work the first miracle at Jerusalem, as the metropolis of Judæa; but at thy request, Mother, I change my order of rule, and will work it in Cana of Galilee.' How loving is the heart of Jesus towards Mary!

Moreover, the answer of Jesus to His Mother on that occasion might be well understood to exclude interpretations calculated to diminish the affection and respect of Jesus towards His Mother. In the article 'Catholic Versions of Scripture' (Dublin Review, vol. ii. April 1837, p. 487), it is said that the translation of the words in St. John ii. 4, 'What is it to Me and to thee, woman?' is erroneous, and that the accurate reading of the said words is this, 'What have I to do with thee?' The author of the article observes that the expression in question might be, and often was, used in the most respectful and even affectionate manner, and he quotes the passage of the First Book of Kings (xvii. 18), when the widow, having obtained from the prophet the resurrection of her son, said, 'What have I to do with thee, thou man of God?' in which words there surely was neither arrogance nor contempt. We add another parallel place from the Second Book of Kings (xvi. 5-10). King David, while going to Bahurim, a man of the kindred of the house of Saul, named Semei, came out cursing him. At such an outrage against the king, Abisai said to the king, 'Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? I will go and cut off his head.' And the king said, 'What have I to do with you, ye sons of Sarvia? Let him alone; let him curse.' Now in this place the same expressions are used as were used by Jesus Christ towards His Mother: 'What have I to do with thee?' and nevertheless no one says that David by the said words intended to reprimand the zeal of Abisai; but he meant only to tell him not to kill Semei, for the reason alleged by David, that 'the Lord hath bid him curse David;' that is, because David considered that God permitted such a

thing as a punishment for his sins. Hence, as the expression used by David means only, Do not interfere; leave Semei to do so; in like manner the expression used by Jesus Christ meant only, in our opinion, *Is this my business, or thine? the supplying of wine is not our business.* And He said so, to show that the miracle which He would work should not be considered wrought for the sake of the bridegroom, but only for the sake and on consideration of His Mother, who desired it. What a new evidence of Christ's condescension towards His Mother!

Indeed, that Jesus Christ did not intend by that answer to object to the working of the miracle desired by Mary, appears also by a twofold circumstance: first, Mary's unhesitation in telling the waiters to go to Jesus, and to do whatsoever He would say to them; the other, Jesus immediately telling the waiters to fill the waterpots with water, to draw out, and carry to the chief steward. These two circumstances are calculated to make us understand, that if Jesus Christ had not intended to work the miracle, Mary, who well knew the intentions of her Son, would not have sent the waiters to Him, nor would Christ immediately have commanded them to have filled the waterpots with water. Therefore, the answer of Jesus Christ to Mary tended only to show that He would not have worked the miracle for the bridegroom, with whom He had nothing to do; but that He would do it only through love and respect to His Mother.

Another difficulty occurs in the miracle, which seems to impair the honour of Mary. She is called by Jesus Christ by the name of *woman*, and not by that of Mother, which seems to argue a want of respect on the part of Jesus to His Mother. However, such an expression, neither in itself nor in reference to Mary, means any want of respect; nay, rather the contrary. Indeed, that it was not disrespectful in itself, appears by history, as we find that such expression was used in olden times in speaking to persons of high rank and dignity, so that even the servants used to call *woman* the greatest princesses whom they served; as among others has been attested by Thomas Scott, whose testimony will be found among the Protestant evidences in the third section of



this chapter. Besides, we read in St. John (xx. 13, 15) that our Saviour, after His resurrection, repeated to Magdalene what the angels had already said to her, viz. : ‘ Woman, why weepest thou ? ’ Now, who can say that the above expression meant a coldness or indifference or disaffection on the part of Jesus Christ or the angel ? By no means ; as from Holy Scripture it is evident that Magdalene was beloved by Jesus Christ, and had received many marks of predilection from Him. Therefore the word *woman*, far from being a disrespectful name, was, on the contrary, a respectful one, a polite word : and if it was so in itself, and in respect of others, it must be so likewise with regard to Mary. Nay, this expression, used by Jesus Christ in speaking of His Mother, is more calculated to show what she really was—the *woman* foretold from the beginning of the world, who had to come to crush the serpent’s head ; the *woman* who, as a new Eve, had with the new Adam to contribute to the restoration of mankind ; the woman, antonomastically called *the woman*, the type of womanly perfection, the powerful *woman*, the great *woman*, who had to repair the damage caused by the fallen woman ; the summary of all the estimable qualities of her sex ; so inclined to piety, so sensitive to the miseries of others, so solicitous and zealous to intercede for all the needy and afflicted ; the *woman* desired by all previous generations and to be blessed by all succeeding ones ; the *woman*, above all women and men, most holy, powerful, mindgifted, and privileged ; the *woman* deserving above all, all favours and graces on the part of her beloved Son. For this reason we never find in Holy Scripture Mary named by Jesus Christ by the name of Mother, but always by that of *woman*, because, in preference to the common name of Mother, the name *woman* was more appropriate to express her grandeur, her high dignity, her great destinies.

Besides, she was the woman destined to be the instrument of the manifestation of the glory of her Divine Son ; and so she was on the occasion we speak of ; for, by desiring the miracle, she was the cause of the glory of Jesus Christ being manifested. Indeed, we read in the said gospel (ii. 2) : ‘ This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and

manifested His glory.' Therefore Mary was the means destined by Providence to make Jesus Christ publicly known and manifested as the true Son of God through the operation of that miracle. Devotion to Mary is then a means to arrive to the devotion to Jesus Christ. This is so true, that it was through her that the first disciples of Jesus Christ believed in Him; or, better, that they were confirmed in the faith, as is related in the same verse: 'And His disciples believed in Him.' The increase of their faith through the evidence of the miracle, they owed to Jesus through Mary. God of course gave it to them, for faith is a gift of God; but He gave it to them through Mary's intervention. A cold believer, or also an incredulous, through Mary's intervention, if she be called upon, may easily obtain from God the gift of the true faith. How beneficial is then the influence of the great Woman! She contributes also, as on the present occasion, to the propagation of the faith and the conversion of souls. Is she then not worthy to be called the blessed of all generations, the object of the love and veneration of all Christians?

This same evangelical fact gives us also to understand that the first promoter of the honour due to Mary, and the first propagator of her power, is Jesus Christ Himself. Indeed it was to yield to her wishes, and to show His willingness to favour her, that Jesus Christ worked the miracle. By this miracle Mary's influence over the heart of her Divine Son is openly established. Thus we see the great motive of confidence we ought to have in her who has such power with her Divine Son. And then, how can it be said that to be devout to Mary, and to honour her, is to detract from the devotion and the honour of Jesus Christ, while Christ Himself by His example invites us to hear her, to be respectful to her, and pay the honour due to her?

The same evangelical narration moreover discovers the beautiful dispositions of Mary's heart towards her clients. It does not appear that Mary was either supplicated by the bridegroom, or by anyone else, to provide, or was even made aware of the deficiency of the wine. She was under no obligation to supply the wants of the house; besides, no one seemed to have been aware of it. Mary was then the first to

discover the want of the newly-married couple, and without being asked, or being under any obligation to assist them, she was solicitous for them. Her tender heart was moved to compassion, as she could not witness the shame which the poor couple would experience on the discovery of the deficiency of the wine, without having perhaps the means of supplying it. So her charitable heart must find the means to provide it, and thus she induces her Divine Son to work a miracle. Many times Mary solicits graces for her clients without being asked. For she, knowing through the light of God all their wants, says to her Divine Son: 'They have no wine; give them the wine of the unction of the Holy Ghost, the intelligence of the divine doctrine, the infusion of grace, the "wine that cheereth the heart of man:" they are my clients, they serve me, and by serving me they serve you; they must drink of the wine of your love.' What a felicity, then, for a Christian to be under the patronage of Mary! How joyful and content were those who had been invited to the marriage feast at Cana under the protection of Mary when they had tasted the wine converted from water! St. Ephrem (Select Works, Morris, Oxford, 1847, p. 36) says: 'Bridegrooms with their brides rejoiced. . . . Blessed the marriage feast where Thou wast present, in which when wine was suddenly wanting, in Thee it abounded again.' But incomparably greater is the happiness of the faithful servants of Mary. They may be sure that she, as their adopted mother, watches over them, and is always ready to intercede for them. Again, if her heart is so tender and loving even for those who do not ask her intercession, what then will she not do for those that ask and supplicate her?

It is also to be observed, how gently and politely Mary acted on this occasion. She said not a word to the newly-married, or any one else about the matter; she made no boasting, no talking, but quietly approaching the ear of Jesus Christ, asked of Him a miracle. How wise and prudent was Mary! For this reason she is deservedly styled by the Church, *Virgo Prudentissima*, 'the most prudent Virgin.' Whatever, therefore, may be the wants of her children, she will not fail to interpose her influence with her Divine Son

for them with the same confidence she did with regard to the poor couple.

We shall make one observation more. The newly-married had the happiness to witness the miracle wrought in their home, because they had invited Mary to their wedding feast. Had they not invited the Mother of Jesus, the miracles would not have taken place—much more so because we have reason to believe that Jesus Christ Himself went thither on account of His Mother. If, then, a Christian wishes to enjoy the protection of Mary, he must invite and entertain her in his home, by the practice of a sincere and true devotion, and introduce and nourish this devotion towards her among his children and dependants. The especial blessing of God is indeed experienced in those families in which is practised a lively and solid devotion to Mary. The united and daily recital of her Rosary at a fixed time, besides maintaining peace and union among the members of the family, is a powerful and most efficacious means of obtaining all graces from God.

In conclusion, if Mary is anxious and solicitous in helping her clients in their corporal wants, how much more will she not be solicitous for their spiritual concerns! Oh, what a motive of confidence for her clients to find grace with God by applying to her intercession! The heart of Mary has not undergone any change since she went to heaven. St. Augustine (in Spec. lib. vi.) says: ‘My dear brethren, we know undoubtedly, and for it let us incessantly return thanks, that as she has more influence with God than all the rest of the saints, so she is more solicitous than anyone else for us all.’

## *2. From the Early Fathers of the Church, as Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

Justin, in reference to what Jesus Christ said on the occasion of the marriage feast (Quæst. et Resp. ad Orthodox. c. cxxxvi.), says: ‘That Jesus Christ by no means acted with disrespect, or did anything against the will of his parents, appears from the Evangelist Luke, who attests that He left Jerusalem with them, and was subject to them.’

St. Augustine (Serm. cxxiii. c. ii. Oper. t. v. p. i. p. 684, Migne) says: 'The Son of the Virgin comes to the nuptials; the same who being with His Father was the author and the institutor of marriage. . . . And what did He on this

FIG. 56.



occasion? He from water made wine. What evidence of His omnipotence!

St. Chrysostom (Homil. xxii. in Joan. v. i. Oper. t. viii. p. 34, Migne) says: 'Why, it may be asked, after saying (Jesus Christ), My hour has not as yet come, He did what His Mother requested? This was through His honour to His Mother.'

St. Cyril (lib. ii. in Joan. c. xxiii.) says : ‘ Jesus Christ gave it to be understood how parents are to be honoured, when He, in consideration of the wish of His Mother, immediately wrought the miracle.’

St. Ambrose (Sermo viii. ad Oper. Appendix, t. ii. p. 619, Migne) says : ‘ It was a great miracle to change water into wine, which shows the majesty of God. Indeed, who is not astonished at seeing the elements transformed into a thing

FIG. 57.



of a different nature? Certainly, no one can change nature but the Author of nature.’ And the same holy doctor (Serm. ix. de Epiph. t. ii. p. 622, Migne), commenting upon the words of the Gospel, ‘ His disciples believed in Him,’ says : ‘ We must believe as the apostles did on that occasion. It is necessary to believe by facts, not by words only ; not with our tongue, but with our heart, in order to avoid that it might be said of us also : “ This people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips glorify me ; but their heart is far from Me.” ’

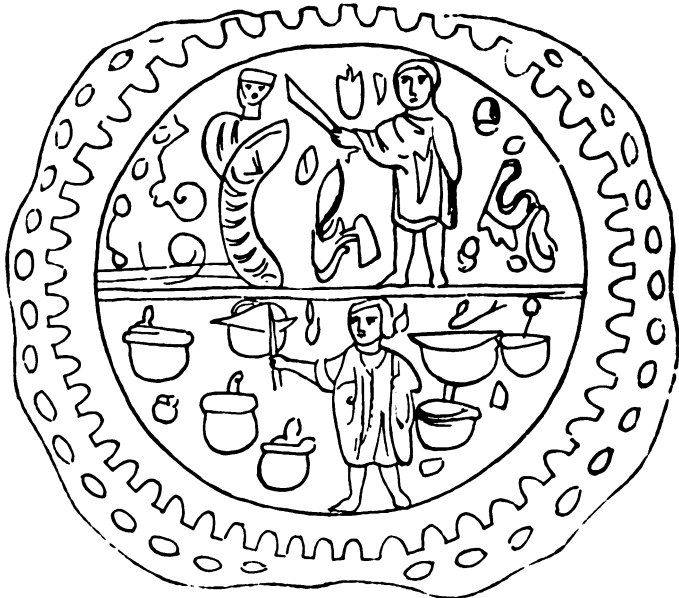
### 3. From Christian Archæology.

In support of our thesis, we exhibit under fig. 56 a bas-relief representing our Blessed Saviour in the act of working the miracle of the water changed into wine. This is a portion of a sarcophagus excavated in the Cemetery of Lucina,

and is noticed in the work '*Roma Sotterranea*' (tav. 51, fig. 6).

The fig. 57 shows our Blessed Lady between two Apostles, who sustain her arms while she is praying. At her right side is Jesus Christ working the miracle of the conversion of the water into wine. It is taken from a sarcophagus of the

FIG. 58.



catacombs of St. Ceriaca, copied by Mrs. Jameson in her work (Suppl. Notes, p. lxxi.).

Fig. 58 exhibits a glass, mentioned in the work '*Roma Sotterranea*' (Pitture, tav. 5), in the upper part of which is indicated the resurrection of Lazarus, and in the lower, the miracle of the conversion of water into wine.

In fig. 59 is exhibited a portion of a diptycon of ivory, which exists in the Church of Milan, illustrated by D. Gaetano Bugatti, who maintains that the said diptycon belongs to the fifth or sixth century. The same has been related by Mazzoni (Tav. Cron. sec. vi.).

We are happy to add here, not the plate, because it is

not as yet published, but the account of a fresco of the nuptial banquet at Cana, found lately in the Christian catacombs of the church of Alexandria in Egypt, discovered by Mr. C. Wescher, and mentioned by Chev. de' Rossi of Rome, in his pamphlet on Christian Archæology of November and the preceding months of 1866. The said fresco is at the right hand of the vestibule, showing the banquet, with Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin, as appears from the inscription IC, which accompanies the image of our Saviour, and H AFIA MAPIA, that accompanies the figure of the Blessed Virgin.

FIG. 59.



## SECTION II.

### EVIDENCE FROM THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.

*Arabic.*—And the wine already failed, and therefore the Mother of Jesus said to Him, They have no wine. Jesus answered her, What is it to Me and to thee? my hour has not yet come. His Mother said to the waiters, Whatsoever He shall say to you, do it. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purification of the Jews; and Jesus said to them, Fill the water-pots with water, &c.

*Syriac.*—And the wine had failed, and the Mother said to Jesus, They have no wine. Jesus said to her, What is it to me and thee, woman? my hour has not yet come. His Mother said to the waiters, Whatsoever He shall say to you, do it. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews; and Jesus said to them, Fill the water-pots with water, &c.

*Persian.*—And the wine failed; therefore the Mother of Jesus said to Him, They have no wine. Jesus answered her, What business hast thou with me, O woman? my time is not as



yet come. The Mother of Jesus told the waiters, Whatever He shall say to you, do it. Jesus commanded them to fill the water-pots with water, &c.

*Ethiopic.*—They had no wine, because it had failed. His Mother said to the Lord Jesus, They have no wine. And the Lord Jesus said, What is it to me and to thee, O woman? my hour has not come. And the Mother of the Lord Jesus said to the waiters, What He shall say, do it. Jesus told them to fill the water-pots with water, &c.

*Greek.*—And failing the wine, the Mother of Jesus said to Him, They have no wine. Jesus says to her, What is it to me and to thee, O woman? my hour has not yet come. His Mother says to the waiters, Whatsoever He shall say, do it. Jesus says to them, Fill the water-pots with water, &c.

We need not observe that all the above versions are perfectly in accordance with the Catholic Vulgate, as are also the English versions, so that we abstain from quoting them here.

### SECTION III.

#### PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

CALVIN, 'Commentary on the Gospels' (a new translation by Rev. W. Pringle, vol. i. p. 831, Edinburgh, 1847), upon the words, 'the Mother of Jesus said to Him,' says: 'I consider her words to be expressive of earnest compassion. For the holy woman, perceiving that those who had been invited were likely to consider themselves as having been treated with disrespect, and to murmur against the bridegroom, and that the entertainment might in that way be disturbed, wished that some means of soothing them should be adopted.'

Thomas Scott, 'The Bible' (John ii. 28), says: 'Mary stated the case to her Son, as under some concern about it, and with expectation of His providing a miraculous supply. There is not, indeed, the least discrepancy in the language which He addressed to her, as the greatest princesses were accosted, even by their servants, in the same manner among

the ancients. And He afterwards used it when speaking from the cross, with the most endearing affection and tenderness. Yet the whole reply was an evident and intentional discouragement to her from interposing on such occasions. His time was not yet come. The time of His open appearance as the Messiah had not yet completely arrived, and a public miracle was not expedient. . . . Mary, however, did not give up the hope of a miraculous supply, though she knew the propriety of not urging it, and, therefore, she ordered the servants carefully to observe His directions, whatever they might be.'

Mrs. Jameson (in her work, p. 276) says: 'The first manifestation of the divine mission and miraculous power of Jesus, was at the wedding feast of Cana in Galilee; and those who had devoted themselves to the especial glorification of the Virgin-Mother, did not forget that it was at her request. His first miracle was accomplished out of her tender and sympathetic commiseration; for the apparent want arose her appeal to Him—not, indeed, as requiring anything from Him, but looking to Him with habitual dependence on His goodness and power, she simply said, "They have no wine." He replied, "Woman, what have I to do with it? Mine hour is not yet come." The term *woman* thus used sounds harsh to us, but in the original is a term of respect. Nor did Jesus intend any denial to the Mother, whom He regarded with dutiful and pious reverence; it was merely an intimation that He had not yet entered into the period of miraculous power. He anticipated it, however, for her sake, and because of her request.'

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE FULFILMENT OF SIMEON'S PROPHECY AS TO THE PARTICIPATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN THE PASSION OF HER DIVINE SON, DEMANDS, ON THE PART OF FEELING CHRISTIANS, BOTH GRATITUDE AND LOVE TOWARDS THE MOTHER OF SORROWS.



## SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From Holy Scripture.*

As soon as Mary consented to become the Mother of the Divine Redeemer, trembling anticipations of her sufferings became her portion. However, her martyrdom was clearly stated by Simeon, on the occasion of the presentation of the Infant Jesus in the Temple. The Gospel says: 'After the days of Mary's purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord' (Luke ii. 22). Mary, on that occasion, raised the Child in her arms, and surrendered Him to the priest. Christ's sacrifice being accomplished, Mary, in the act of recovering Him, was made the subject of a remarkable prophecy. 'Behold,' Simeon said to her, 'this Child is come for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted, and thy own soul a sword shall pierce' (Luke ii. 35).

Of course, the *sword* mentioned in the prophecy is not to be understood as being a material sword that should pierce Mary's body, because Mary did not suffer any martyrdom in her body; but it is to be understood to be a symbolic and mystic sword, a sword of pain and anguish, a sword of afflic-

tions and sorrows; in short, a sword which would pierce her soul.

This same mystic sword was predicted four thousand years before, in the most ancient prophecy of the world, already mentioned by us, when God said to the serpent, 'I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.' In consequence of this prophecy, Mary, through her seed Jesus, had to crush and destroy the kingdom of the devil on earth, and deliver the human race from the slavery of the devil; not, however, without suffering a temporary injury from his malice. He would *lie in wait for her heel*; which means, that as Jesus Christ, being the new Adam, had to pay the ransom for mankind; so the Virgin Mary, as the new Eve, should also pay her share for fallen man by participating, in the interior of her heart, in the Passion of her Divine Son. This she accepted from the very moment she said to Gabriel, 'Be it done to me according to thy word;' and it was generously accomplished by her on Calvary, so that she deserved to be called by the Church the *Queen of Martyrs*.

Indeed, her martyrdom was, in the first place, *exceedingly great*; that is, it was such as to admit no equal, save the sufferings of her Divine Son. It is only the mother of a charming and loving child that can form a tolerable idea of the state of the soul of Mary at seeing her beloved Son so cruelly treated and tormented. The more a mother loves her infant, the more she feels the parting from him. There was no mother who loved her son more perfectly than Mary; and, consequently, no mother could be found who had felt such pain and affliction in losing her son as Mary did. Her excessive affection was derived, in the first place, from her *natural love* towards Him, both as God and as man. Besides His corporal beauty, He was the most amiable amongst all men on account of His moral and social virtues, which enchanted all hearts, especially the most loving one of the Mother. Consequently, her affliction must have been unparalleled at beholding such a Son so unjustly accused, so cruelly treated, and so ignominiously condemned to the

death of the cross. As she loved her Son more than herself, she would rather have given up her own life than have seen Him suffer and die. She likewise loved her Son by a most perfect *supernatural love*; contemplating in Him not only the humanity received of her, but particularly the Divine nature and person clothed with all His infinite perfections. To consider her God, her Creator, her all, so despised, humiliated, afflicted, tormented, what pain must it have been to her so loving and religious heart! Moreover, she loved her Son with love called *acquired* (*acquisitus*), derived in her from beholding in Him ever new virtues, new perfections, new personal attractions, which made Him every day more amiable, more dear, more affectionate to her heart; and yet what affliction for her to consider His going to die so painful and ignominious a death! Very painful to Abraham must have been the command of God to sacrifice, by his own hands, Isaac his only son, so dear to his heart; but how much more painful was it for Mary to have to give up the life of her dear Jesus! She nevertheless did so, and suffered such a pain for our sake.

This martyrdom of Mary, besides, was not for a short period, as were in general the sufferings of the martyrs; but it was *continual*: it lasted from the moment of her acquiescence to become the Mother of God, till after the death of her Son; that is, for thirty-three years continually. As Jesus was the only object of the love of Mary, so she never could draw her attention from Him, and could not help thinking of His Passion; so much so, that her beloved Son was for her a perpetual bunch of myrrh. From the moment of the conception of Him in her womb she entered with Him into the way of Calvary, beholding Him always accompanied by the frightful catastrophe of so many pains and torments. As soon as He was born she began to suffer, beholding Him destitute in a manger, deprived of every comfort. At His circumcision she saw the first blood He shed; then she felt for Him, and had to reflect upon those little drops of blood as the commencement of that fount of blood which He had to shed at the end of His life. She was obliged to take the Infant, and fly in haste with Him into Egypt, amidst idolatrous

people, without having any abode, any friends, or any of the comforts of life. After her return she had the sorrow of losing (though without her fault) her beloved in Jerusalem; and, during the three days He was absent, she had undergone the most acute anxiety and anguish. Though she had the happiness of having her beloved and dear Jesus remaining with her, subject to her till the thirtieth year of His age, nevertheless the awful time of His Passion and death was never absent from her thoughts. The Sacrifice of Calvary was, as it were, every moment reverberated and repeated upon her tender heart; and, in proportion as the time became near at hand, the prospect of the bloody sacrifice of her beloved Son became more sensible and painful.

The sorrow of Mary, moreover, was *without consolation*. This is the peculiarity only of the sufferings of the Mother of God, to suffer without any inward consolation. Indeed, the sufferings of the martyrs were alleviated by the force of the divine love that reigned in their breasts, so that the intensity of the divine love, and the inward supernatural consolations they felt, made them superior to all torments, and often as it were unconscious of the sufferings inflicted on them, showing the greatest happiness in the midst of the greatest corporal sufferings. St. Lawrence indeed greatly suffered, being burnt alive on a gridiron; yet, as has been observed by St. Augustine (Tract. 27), the inward love by which he was inflamed was felt to be greater than the outward fire burning his body. But it was not so with Mary: the love of God which domineered her heart, instead of diminishing her pains, was, as it were, the intrinsic and formal cause of their increasing, because her grief on account of the Passion of her Son was in proportion to her love towards Him; so that the more she loved Him, the more she felt pain at His sufferings and death. Hence, as there was no love of creatures so intense towards God as that of Mary, so there was no sorrow so great and so prolonged as that of Mary's. Every mother likes to leave her child alive at her death; but Mary was sure that her Divine Son Jesus had to die before her, and even to have to go through such a death. Above all, her heart was cruelly grieved by the consideration

that, notwithstanding the giving up the life of her Son for the salvation of all, there would be many among the redeemed who by their own perversity would meet with eternal damnation. How inconsolable this must have been for her maternal loving heart !

But the last period of the life of Jesus, and the last and most cruel impending trial of Mary, is to be considered. Jesus being already betrayed, captured, and carried before impious judges, as the most wretched assassin, every kind of injury was made use of against Him. He is bound like a ferocious animal, accused by false witnesses, struck, slapped, spit upon, scourged, crowned with thorns, sentenced most iniquitously to die the ignominious death of the cross. Mary is aware of all this, and her heart is in an ocean of grief. It was there that she felt the puncture of those acute thorns which had penetrated the head of her Son ; there she suffered the pain of the whips with which He was scourged ; and there were kept, as in their centre, all wounds and ignominies, producing such a sensation as was proper to be produced in the heart of the most loving mother. Jesus has been conducted to Calvary, and Mary is also there : her sufferings then reached their climax. She saw Jesus stripped almost naked ; she saw Him dashed rudely on the ground ; she saw Him hold out His hands to be drilled ; she saw Him laid upon the cross ; she saw Him have His arms rudely stretched to make the holes come where they were to be nailed ; she saw Him fastened first by the hands, after by the feet, to the cross ; she saw, too, the precious blood of her Son flow upon the dust. And while she was present at such a frightful scene, she felt her maternal bowels broken by grief and compassion, so that she would have fainted had she not been aided by superior power. The cross with her beloved Son being raised, the Gospel says, 'she stood near the cross of her Divine Son.' She must have expected that at least in the last moments of His life, her dear Son would be pitied by that ungrateful and blaspheming people, as is generally the case even with the most iniquitous malefactors. But by an awful exception, her Jesus, far from being pitied, He, till the last moment of His life, is despised, injured, and

tormented. Mary therefore has to witness the impious Jews, who, looking at Him and contemptuously shaking their heads, insult Him, and use towards Him words of derision and contempt. In the meantime all pains and torments which her Divine Son was suffering in His body and soul are reflected in Mary's heart. She feels the noxious vinegar and gall given to Him; she feels all the contempt and ignominies of the perfidious Jews against Him; in short, while her beloved Son is suffering so much in His body and soul, Mary is grievously tormented, pierced, and cruelly lacerated with sorrow and anguish in her heart. She would have decidedly preferred to have undergone any torments herself for the ransom of fallen man, rather than stand by and see them inflicted on the object of her love, on the life of her life. But the justice of God required only her mystical death, and by this Simeon's prophecy is fulfilled, and Mary's mission is accomplished. Mary, therefore, in the intensity as well as in the length and unparalleled quality of her sufferings, is deservedly called by the Church, *Queen of Martyrs*, and as such she claims on the part of feeling Christians both love and gratitude.

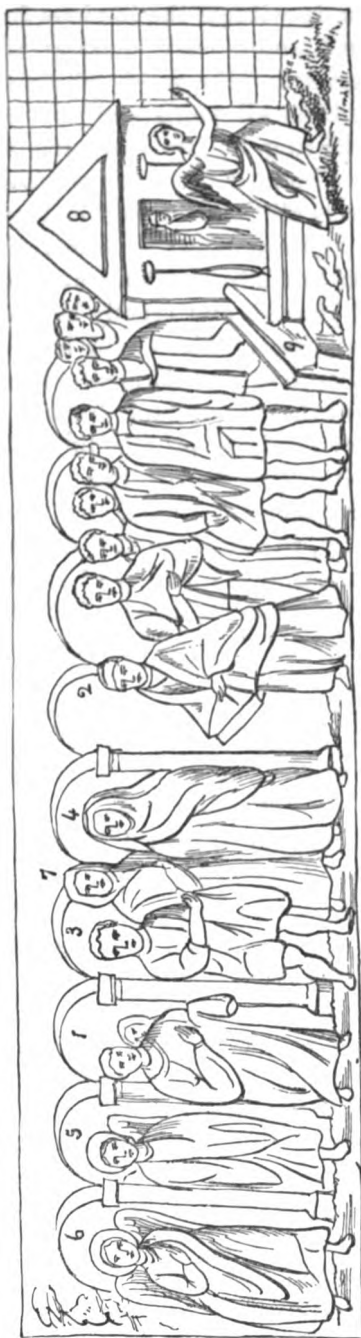
2. *From the Early Fathers of the Church, as Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

St. Augustine (Mai, Nova Patrum Bibl. t. i. 3, 4) says: 'Eve by the fruit of the tree was the cause of our condemnation; Mary through the sacrament of the tree caused us to be absolved, because Christ was hanged on the Cross as a fruit. Eve is the mother of mankind; Mary is for it the means of salvation.' And the same holy father (Ep. cxlix., c. iii. § 33), alluding to Simeon's prophecy, says, 'It is to be believed that under the name of sword was understood the tribulation by which her maternal soul was wounded through the anguish.' Again, the same (Serm. viii. de Pass.) says that the Blessed Virgin on Calvary found herself so carried away by love and compassion towards Christ crucified, that 'she wished to embrace Christ while hanging on the cross; but she found herself unfit for the task.'

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FIG. 60.



St. Ambrose (*De Inst. Virg. cap. vii. Oper. tom. iii. p. 318, Migne*) says: 'The Mother stood at the foot of the cross, and while the men fled away, she remained in a most intrepid manner. She then with her pious eyes looked at the wounds of her Son, through which she knew that the redemption of all should be accomplished. The Mother stood present, not as an alien spectator, and was not afraid of the slayers. While her Son was hanging on the Cross, she offered herself to the persecutors.'

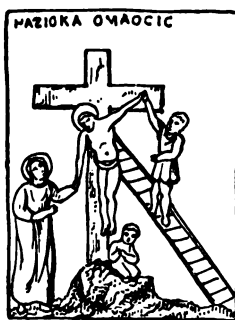
To form an idea of the part Mary had in the human Redemption, we think proper to quote a passage taken from St. James of Sarug, in the already mentioned work, p. 247. It runs as follows (*Carmen i. 457-485*): 'Mary appeared to us, as it were, a sealed letter, wherein the mysteries and secrets of the Son were contained. She herself offered her own body, pure as clear paper, upon which the Word inscribed His essence corporally. The Son was the Word; but she was herself, as we have said, a letter, by which pardon was given to the whole world. The letter was not one which was sealed up after it was

written; but the Three Persons of the Trinity themselves sealed it from the beginning, and then wrote therein. It was sealed, and was written upon; nay, was also read, the seal remaining unbroken, because mysteries deeper than ordinary the Father revealed by it. The Word came within the unbroken seals, and entered into her; she preserved the marks of a virgin in her body, and had an infant within her miraculous womb! By this letter the Father sent to us tidings of the greatest joy; by it came remission to all debtors; by it liberty was granted to Adam in his slavery; he himself became heir with the other sons, and was restored

FIG. 61.



FIG. 62.



to the position which he had forfeited. By it the highest powers were reconciled with the lowest, the contending parties established a lasting peace, and the reproach which had clung to all women through all generations was removed. By it the path of Eden, hitherto shut, was opened; the serpent fled, and mankind returned to God. By it the cherub sheathed his sword, no longer wanting to guard the tree of life, which now offered itself for the benefit of those who had to eat it. It was Mary who afforded us the sweet and life-giving fruit, to the end that we may eat of it and live for ever with God.'

3. *From Christian Archæology.*

In fig. 60 we exhibit a portion of the mosaic of the Basilica of St. Maria Maggiore of Rome, executed in the year 443, and described in Ciampini's work, '*Monumenta Vetera*' (tom. i.

FIG. 63.



FIG. 64.



tav. 49, p. 200). It represents the presentation of our Saviour in the Temple, where the celebrated prophecy of Simeon was pronounced. No. 1 represents the Blessed Virgin with the

FIG. 65.



Divine Infant; No. 2, Simeon; No. 3, St. Joseph; No. 4, the Prophetess; Nos. 5 and 6, two angels, the guardians of the Virgin Mary; No. 7, an angel guardian of St. Joseph; No. 8, the Temple; No. 9, the offering of a pair of doves by Mary and Joseph.

Fig. 61 exhibits the crucifixion of our Saviour. This illustration is taken from the door of Pisa, of an uncertain epoch, but belonging perhaps

to the eighth century. It is mentioned by Ciampini (tav. 20).

Figs. 62, 63, 64 exhibit several representations of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, described by the same author.

Fig. 65 shows the taking down of Jesus Christ from the

cross, and the Blessed Virgin embracing Him, as copied by Agincourt (v. i. iv. tav. 12, s. 24).

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## SECTION II.

EVIDENCE FROM THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE IN  
RELATION TO SIMEON'S PROPHECY.

*Greek*.—And a sword will also pierce thy soul.

*Syriac*.—On the remainder a lance will pass over thy soul itself.

*Persian*.—The lance will pass over thy soul.

*Arabic*.—And the lance of scandal will pass thy soul.

*Ethiopic*.—And the sword will enter thy soul.

*Wickliffe*, 1380.—A swerd schal passe thoru thin owne soule.

*Tyndale*, 1534.—And moreover the swearde shall pearce thy soule.

*Geneva*, 1557.—Yea, and a sword shal pearce through thy soule.

*Cranmer*, 1539.—And moreover the swearde shall pierce thy soule.

*Rheims*, 1582.—And thine owne soule shal a sword pearce.

*Authorised*, 1611.—Yea, a sword shall pearce throu thy owne soule also.

By all the above versions the accuracy of the Catholic Vulgate is vindicated.

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## SECTION III.

PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

DR. HICKES (the work above cited, p. 292), says: 'Where-soever the gospel is preached, that which she (Mary) hath done and suffered for our Lord, ought to be spoken of as a memorial of her from whom He took that very Body which was crucified, and that precious blood which was shed for the remission of our sins.'

Calvin, 'Commentary on the Gospel,' new translation by Rev. W. Pringle (vol. i. Edinburgh, 1847, pp. 35, 130), says : 'But also a sword shall pierce thy own soul. This warning must have contributed greatly to fortify the mind of the Holy Virgin, and to prevent her from being overwhelmed with grief when she came to those distressing struggles which she had to undergo. . . . She was not overwhelmed with grief; but it would have required a heart of stone not to be deeply wounded. For the patience of the saints differs widely from stupidity.'

Thomas Scott, 'The Holy Bible,' upon Luke (chap. xi. v. 35), says : 'Notwithstanding the distinguished honour conferred on Mary, she must have expected to witness such things from the cruelty and enmity which the people and the rulers exercised against her Son, as would, like a sword, pierce her soul with most intense anguish. This must have been emphatically the case when she stood by the cross on which He suffered.'

And the same author (John xix. 27) says : 'The inward anguish and conflicting thoughts and affections with which the mind of Mary must have been agitated on this most distressing occasion, can never be described, or imagined. But considering all the expectations excited by the conception, birth, and infancy of Jesus, and all the miracles and other extraordinary circumstances of His public ministry, she could scarcely doubt even when she saw Him expire on the cross, but that He was the promised Messiah, the King of Israel.'

Bishop Bull, 'On the Invocation,' &c. (Catholic Safeguards, t. ii. p. 270), relates that the Blessed Virgin 'was standing by the cross of her Son, beholding His Passion, and thereby fulfilling the prophecy of good Simeon "that a sword should pierce through her own soul."'

## CHAPTER XVII.

MARY HAVING BEEN APPOINTED ON CALVARY BY JESUS CHRIST THE COMMON MOTHER OF CHRISTIANS, TO SEEK HER INTERCESSION IS BOTH LAWFUL AND BENEFICIAL.

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SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From the Holy Scripture.*

IN human affairs, the last words, the last recommendations, the last wishes of a dying parent to his children, are highly esteemed and not easily forgotten. And if it is so with respect to all mortals, what shall we say in reference to the last words and wishes of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ? Will not they deserve to be respectfully received, greatly esteemed, and perfectly executed? Now, being on the point of death, in the midst of the greatest pains and torments for the salvation of mankind, Jesus Christ spoke from the cross a few words, calculated to remain perpetually impressed on the minds and hearts of all mankind. Among these words, those addressed to His Blessed Mother and His beloved disciple John, deserve for our purpose a particular attention. Therefore our Blessed Saviour, in those supreme moments of His precious life, forgetting, as it were, all his sufferings, is only anxious for our welfare, and wishes to give to His beloved disciples, and to Christians of all future generations, a new pledge of His great love, as well as a new and efficacious means to facilitate their eternal salvation. Hence, looking on His Mother and the disciple who stood beside Him, He said to Mary, indicating John, ‘Woman, behold thy son;’ then,

turning to His disciple, He said to him, 'Behold thy mother.' By the former words, 'Woman, behold thy son,' we think we have a right to infer that Jesus Christ meant to say, Woman, look at my disciple, and in him at all Christians, of whom John is now the figure and representative: thou art appointed, therefore, to be the mother not only of John, but of all Christians, of all who believe in Me. Then by saying to John, 'Behold thy mother,' He meant to say, Mary is appointed by Me to be thy Mother, and the Mother likewise of all believers; therefore receive and honour her as thy and their common Mother. Indeed, Jesus Christ left John to Mary not as a particular individual, not as John, but as a *disciple*, a name common to all Christians, every Christian being a disciple of Jesus Christ. Hence Mary was given by Jesus Christ to be the Mother of all disciples of Jesus Christ.

In the third paragraph of this section an ancient diptycon is exhibited, in which the Crucifixion of our Saviour is represented, and in it is to be seen St. John, with the inscription upon his head, 'Disciple, behold thy Mother.' St. Ambrose accordingly says that Jesus Christ, by making His will on the cross, left all Christians the spiritual children of Mary, and consequently made Mary the spiritual Mother of all Christians. And so true is it that the above words of Jesus Christ addressed to Mary, had the mysterious meaning we give to them, that Cyril of Alexandria (in *Expos. Evang.*) goes so far as to say that it would be little short of insanity to think that Jesus Christ on so solemn an occasion would have thus spoken, guided only by a natural affection. Indeed, Jesus Christ appears on Calvary before the world no more as the natural Son of Mary, and Mary no more as the natural Mother of Jesus Christ. All natural affection between them was at an end, only to give room to spiritual general affection to fallen man. Here was to be accomplished the old prophecy made in Eden after the sin of our forefathers, of which we already spoke in the first chapter of this work. Indeed it was on Calvary, after the long space of four thousand centuries, that Adam and Eve come forward, the former in the person of Jesus Christ, the latter of Mary the Virgin. They are the new Adam and the new Eve. The old Adam and Eve had

been the authors of the ruin of the spiritual life of mankind ; Jesus Christ now, as the new Adam, is the Author and Father of the spiritual life to which man, through His merits, has been restored ; and Mary as the new Eve, through her inward sufferings and those of Jesus Christ, is made the spiritual mother of all Christians. Eve had been the mother of all the dead ; Mary is the mother of all the living restored to life by her Son. On this subject St. Epiphanius (Hær. lxxviii. 18) observes that Adam called Eve mother of the living only by enigma, in a figure, because by so calling her he intended speaking of the mother of the future Redeemer, as the woman to whom such a title in its spiritual meaning belonged. Here are the words of the said father : ‘ This is she who is signified by Eve, who received the appellation of mother of all living in figure. For Eve is there called mother of the living even after she had been told, after that transgression, “ Earth thou art, and to earth shalt thou return.” And it was a marvel that after that transgression she had this grand title given her. According to the exterior, the whole race of men upon earth was born from that Eve ; but in this case life is truly born to the world from Mary, that she might bring forth the Living One, and so Mary be the mother of the living. Mother of all living, then, as in figure, Mary is meant. . . . But there is another thing wondrous to think upon in these women, in Eve and Mary. For Eve was the pretext of death to mankind, inasmuch as it was through her that death entered into the world ; but Mary was the pretext of life, as it was through her that life was born to us.’ To the same effect, St. Augustine (whose words we have quoted before) says that Mary is to be acknowledged as the mother of all the members of our Saviour, because, on account of her charity, she ‘ co-operated in the spiritual nativity of the faithful in the Church.’ St. Peter Chrysologus (Serm. cxl.) accordingly says of Mary, ‘ Woman is now truly made by grace the mother of the living, who had been by nature the mother of the dying.’ Mary therefore was made our spiritual mother by our dying Father Jesus Christ, and as such she must be acknowledged by all Christians. Hence St. Leo (Serm. xxx.) says, ‘ It is



deserving and convenient that the last will of the Father be executed by the adopted children.'

It was for the very reason of Mary's being appointed spiritual mother of Christians, that Jesus Christ on the cross called her by the name of *woman*, not mother : ' Woman, behold thy Son.' She was that woman of whom the Holy Trinity spoke from the beginning of the world as the providential creature who, through her Son, had to crush the head of the enemy of mankind, and destroy his kingdom. She was the woman to be blessed by all generations, who was the expectation of all ages, so often predicted by the Prophets, and typified by many figures and symbols, as the repara<sup>trix</sup> of the losses caused by Eve, and the summary and type of womanly perfection. She was the powerful woman who had to take an eminent place in the work of redemption, and share in the great combat on Calvary, where the salvation of mankind should be the result, and who paid at that moment such a weighty ransom by giving the very life of her beloved Son for us her spiritual children. This is the woman who is so easy to be moved to pity, and so inclined to intercede for all miserable, needy sons of Adam. Oh, the great woman ! Oh, the worthy mother ! How beneficial must be her intercession, since she has been given as mother to us by our Redeemer !

Moreover, it was required by the amiable Divine Providence, that the Blessed Virgin should be constituted, on Calvary, the mother of Christians, as an essential element in the Church of Christ. Indeed, as in Christian society there is the father of the family, so it was required that there should be also the mother of the same family, with all the influence and prerogatives proper for that interesting office, for the spiritual good of her adopted children, so that she should do in the order of grace what a temporal mother would do in the order of nature. Therefore, Mary is to be considered in the Church as the good mother of a large family, who inspires a profound and affectionate veneration, governing her spiritual children with all sweetness and efficacy, all tenderness and compassion, all clemency and love, to help them towards their eternal felicity. The valiant woman who could not be found in the law of Moses, is Mary, in the law of

grace, as the Mother of God, and the mother of Christians, who, according to what is said in the Book of Proverbs (xxx. 10), 'has opened her arms to the needy, and stretched out her hands to the poor; who has opened her mouth in wisdom, and the love of clemency is on her tongue. Her children rose up and called her blessed. Many daughters have gathered together riches; she has surpassed them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain. The woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.'

Everyone knows that the father of a family, in pursuance of his duty, is obliged to punish the transgressions of the rules of the family, and to reprimand such of his children as are guilty of misconduct; still, not wishing to make use of severity, and being inclined to forgive and spare the delinquent, he desires that the mother of the family should interfere in order to make them sensible of their errors, and at the same time to soften his paternal justice, and present them to him repentant of the evil they had done, that so he might spare the chastisement they deserved. In like manner, Jesus Christ, being the Father of the Christian family, has to punish such as are wanting in their duty; but He being mercifully inclined to pardon them, wishes that Mary, as their common mother, should interfere as mediatrix, and reconcile Christian sinners with their offended Father. So the influence of Mary with her Divine Son, in favour of her spiritual children, is desired by Jesus Christ Himself. On this account Mary is called *Aurora consurgens*, the rising dawn. Between God and sin there is, indeed, no intermediate way; but between day and night there is the *rising dawn*. Now, as the rising dawn unites the day and the night, so Mary brings the repentant sinner to make his peace with God, and from the night of sin to pass to the light of grace. She remembers how much their ransom on Calvary cost her Divine Son and herself. Her maternal bowels cannot allow her to be indifferent to the dreadful state of a sinner; much more so, because such is the will of her beloved Son, and therefore she exercises this pleasing office with all the eagerness and love of her truly maternal heart, so that she becomes, in favour of a repentant sinner, an instrument of mercy and

pardon, and through her God's wrath is appeased, and the sinner is absolved. It is, then, in consideration of this office conferred upon Mary by her Divine Son, that the Church calls her *Mater Misericordiæ*, Mother of Mercy.

Nor is it only for the above reasons that the Christian must feel veneration for, and confidence in the Blessed Virgin; she has other claims upon our filial hearts. Indeed, a good mother of a family is not content with possessing only the name of mother; she is not content with interposing herself between the repentant children and their offended father; she also proceeds to exercise other important functions proper to her motherhood: she keeps her children far from danger; she guides, defends, and succours them; she assists them in their infirmities, and watches carefully over them, and never abandons them, even at the point of death. Besides, the more ardently a mother loves her children, the more patiently she endures sufferings for their sake. However her children may occasion her grief and sorrow, and oblige her to make great sacrifices, she still continues to love them, and feels, as her own, all their sorrows and misfortunes; nay, she is then more solicitous for them, and she does not spare herself if she can be in any way useful to them. However troublesome and disagreeable they may be in their infirmities, and however contagious their diseases, she never abandons them; her maternal love never diminishes, it is never tired, it never becomes languid; but meets all dangers, overcomes all difficulties, and is as strong as death—*fortis ut mors dilectio*. Such is the type of a true and good natural mother, and such is the true idea, according to the teaching of the fathers, of the spiritual maternity of Mary towards her adopted children. A Christian, indeed, finds in Mary a truly maternal heart, full of compassion for his spiritual wants, and all solicitous for his eternal happiness. No human mother has ever had, nor ever could have, so much solicitude for her children as Mary. She inherited, for that purpose, the sweet loving affections of the sacred heart of her Divine Son, so that her love for us is a participation of the same tender love of Jesus Christ; her wishes for our salvation are the same as His, and her par-

ticular intent is to bring her children to the love of their Father. She is the only one, among all creatures, to whom the angel of God said: 'Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace' (Luke i. 30). And such grace is employed by her in favour of her clients, in order to keep them in the friendship of God, if just, or to cause their conversion and return to God, if sinners. Hence the Church, as interpreter of the Divine will, in the second prayer of the Mass for the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, says to God: 'Let, O Lord, the prayer of the Mother of God help thy people, now that she is in heaven, in order that we may experience her intercession with Thee in celestial glory.' And, in another prayer (*Concede misericors Deus*), the Church asks God 'to grant us the powerful aid of Mary's intercession, that we may rise from our sins.' Mary, therefore, having been appointed by Jesus Christ our mother, and she being solicitous for her spiritual children, it follows that to seek her intercession is both lawful and beneficial. Then, what gratitude, veneration, and love does she deserve from us in return for all her tenderness and maternal affection!

2. *From the Early Fathers of the Church, as Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

St. Ephrem the Syrian, the oldest father of the Eastern Church (de Laud. Mariæ, tom. iii. p. 156, Wiseman, Lect. xiii.), says: 'In thee, patroness and mediatrix with God, who was born from thee, the human voice placeth its joy, and ever is dependent upon thy patronage; and in thee alone hath refuge and defence, who hast full confidence in Him. Behold, I also draw nigh to thee with a fervent soul, imploring that through thy intercession I may obtain salvation. Despise not, then, thy servant who places all his hopes in thee after God; reject him not, placed in grievous danger and oppressed with many griefs; but thou who art compassionate and the mother of a merciful God, have mercy on thy servant, &c.'

St. John Chrysostom (Homil. de Præs. B. V.) says: 'Thou hadst been chosen from eternity to be the Mother of God,

that thy mercy might procure salvation for those whom the justice of God thy Son could not save.'

St. Augustine (de Sanc. Virgin. c. vi. lib. un. Oper. tom. vi. p. 399, Migne) says: 'She (Mary) is the spiritual mother, not of our Head, who is our Saviour, but of His members, who we are.' And again (Serm. i. de Tempor.), to make us understand the power of Mary in our favour, he says that 'she has been made the window of Heaven, and the celestial ladder.'

### 3. *From Christian Archæology.*

By fig. 66 we exhibit a diptycon described by Buonarroti (Osservazioni sopra i Vasi Antichi di Vetro, Firenze, 1716,

FIG. 66.

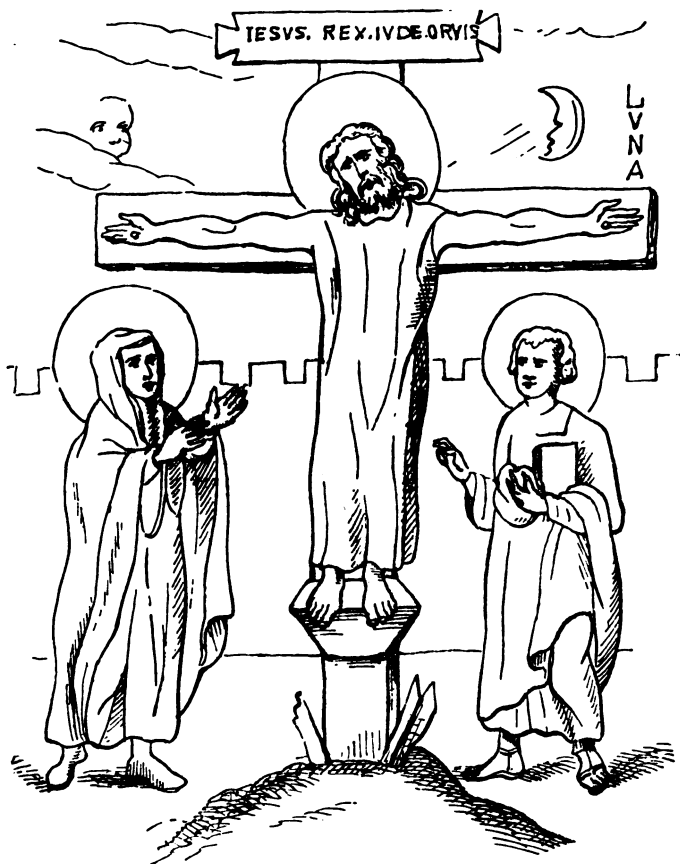


p. 266), who, speaking of the said diptycon, says: 'The Blessed Mother here, and in other paintings in accordance with the Gospel narrative, is painted standing, and not in the act of fainting, or sitting down. Indeed, though, in the passion and death of the Saviour, Mary felt a grief in the most intense degree, because of her being bound with ties of a fervent love for Jesus Christ, and her knowing perfectly the dignity and amiable qualities of her beloved Son, as well as the deformity of sin, for which He was going to die, and the

ingratitude of men; nevertheless a wonderful constancy was in her, so that she united her will to that of her Son, by offering Him for our sins and redemption. Therefore, she being imbued with the same feelings of her Son towards us, preferred the love for us to the love of her Son, and desired that the sacrifice of His life for our redemption should be accomplished. Hence the pious painter caused the Virgin to indicate with her right hand the agonising Redeemer, as it were to invite mankind to consider the great mystery of

love. On the transverse of the cross are roughly inscribed the words said by Jesus Christ to His Mother, 'Mulier, ecce Filius;' and to His disciple, 'Ecce mater tua.' I have learnt from Monsignor Fontanini, that in the collegiate Church of Civitale

FIG. 67.



of Friuli there is a little table, caused to be made by Orso Duke of Friuli, in which there is a Crucifixion sculptured with the Virgin and the Disciple, and that upon the Virgin is written *M·EN·FIL·TVVS*, and upon St. John *ΔP·ECCE·M·TVA*, which words give us to understand that the inscription on this diptycon ought to read: 'Mulier, en Filius tuus;' and 'Discipule, ecce Mater tua.'

Fig. 67 exhibits likewise the Crucifixion of our Saviour, having at the sides of the cross His Blessed Mother and His beloved disciple. Mary is in the act of expressing her great compassion towards her dying Son, while John holds in his left hand a book, and with the right hand indicates the suffering of the Blessed Redeemer. It is to be observed that our Blessed Saviour crucified, in this painting as well as in the other paintings exhibited by us in this section, has in His

FIG. 68.



blessed arms and feet four nails, such having been the custom of representing Him by the early Christians, conformable to the truth. This image is taken from Aringhi (tom. ii. lib. iv. cap. xlii. p. 353), and also from Agincourt (vol. vi. tav. 17, fig. 17), who affirms that the said picture was found in the Cemetery of St. Julius, Via Flaminia, at Rome.

By fig. 68 is exhibited the Crucifixion of our Saviour, as taken from the Treasury of Monsa, and described by J. Mozzoni in his work already mentioned. The title of the cross is IC·X, viz. Ἰησοῦς Χριστός ('Jesus Christ'). Under the right

hand there is the following inscription:—**ΙΑΕ·Ο·Υ·C·C**, viz. 'Ecce Filius tuus;' under the left hand is written **ΙΑ·H·M·P·C**, viz. 'Ecce mater tua.' The monument belongs to the seventh century.

FIG. 69.

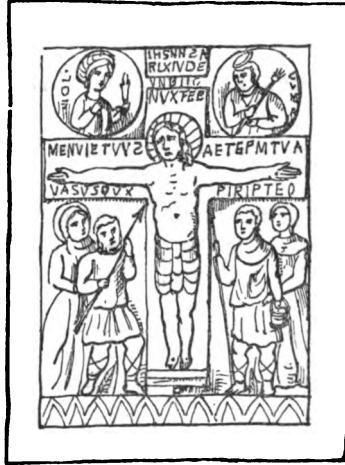


Fig. 69 shows also the Crucifixion worked in ivory by order of Orso Duke of Friuli. It was a little tablet called a *pax*, because it was given to be kissed in the Mass after the Gospel. The same has been described by J. Mozzoni in the aforesaid work, among the monuments of the eighth century.

## SECTION II.

EVIDENCE FROM THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE IN  
RELATION TO THE WORDS OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR PRO-  
NOUNCED ON THE CROSS.

*Greek*.—Woman, behold thy Son! . . . Behold thy Mother!

*Syriac*.—Woman, behold thy Son! . . . Behold thy Mother!

*Persian*.—Woman, behold thy Son! . . . Behold thy Mother!

*Arabic*.—Woman, this is thy Son. . . . This is thy Mother.

*Ethiopic*.—Woman, behold thy Son! . . . Behold thy Mother!



*Wicliff*, 1380.—Lo the Son! . . . Lo the Mother!

*Tyndale*, 1534.—Behold thy Sonne! . . . Behold thy Mother!

*Cranmer*, 1593.—Behold thy Sonne! . . . Behold thy Mother!

*Geneva*, 1557.—Behold thy Sonne! . . . Behold thy Mother!

*Rheims*, 1582.—Behold thy Sonne! . . . Behold thy Mother!

*Authorised*, 1611.—Behold thy Sonne! . . . Behold thy Mother!

No observation is required with regard to all the above versions, as there is not even a slight difference between them and the Catholic Vulgate.

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### SECTION III.

#### PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

THE ‘Annotated Paragraph Bible,’ London, 1857 (upon chap. ix. of St. John, v. 27), says: ‘Woman, behold, &c.—In so doing, He (Jesus Christ) showed that neither the all important work which He was then accomplishing, nor the unparalleled sufferings which He had to bear, diminished the force or tenderness of his human sympathy and filial love.’

Thomas Scott, ‘The Bible’ (upon the same chapter), says: ‘Jesus amidst his own sufferings was tenderly mindful of her, and by turning her attention to John, the disciple, as one who could be a son to her, and by mentioning her to him as his mother, to whom he was to perform the duty of that relation for His sake, He influenced John to take her to his own home, to provide for her, and to treat her with all respect and affection as long as she lived.’

Dr. Hickes, ‘On the Due Praise,’ &c. (Catholic Safeguards, tom. ii. p. 292), says: ‘Wheresoever the Gospel is preached, that which she hath done and suffered for our Lord ought to be spoken of, as a memorial of her from whom He took that very body which was crucified, and that precious blood which was shed for the remission of our sins.’

## CHAPTER XVIII.

VENERATION AND CONFIDENCE TOWARDS THE MOTHER OF GOD  
IS CONGENIAL TO THE HUMAN MIND AND HEART, SO THAT  
MARY CLAIMS ALL OUR SYMPATHY AND LOVE.

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 SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From Holy Scripture.*

OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, on the one hand wishing the eternal salvation of all mankind, and on the other knowing the weakness of human nature, in His divine wisdom saw that one of the means to help human frailty, and bring redeemed man more easily in the right way of heaven, would be to establish in His Church, His Mother's influence as an element congenial to the human heart and mind. Hence, when dying on the cross, as we showed in the foregoing chapter, He appointed His beloved Mother as our spiritual mother, telling John, the representative of all Christians, to regard her as the spiritual mother of him, as well as of all Christians. Upon that occasion our Saviour made us the adoptive sons of Mary, and His brethren on the part of His Mother, and wished that as a child sleeping quietly in his mother's arms is carried where his parent desires him to go, so a Christian client of Mary, sleeping sweetly under the protection of Mary, as it were in his mother's arms, should be led to fulfil the divine will, and by doing so reach his eternal salvation.

In a family, the name of father is very tender indeed, and sweet; yet he, being obliged to take the part of justice and

order, by punishing also the transgressions of the rules of the family, and the authors of disorder, the children feel that the sense of pure love is somewhat weakened and shaken in them, by giving room to that of fear. But the case is different with regard to the mother of a family, as her office causes neither fear nor dread, but only means bounty, peace, mercy, and love. The children then are brought towards her with full conviction of experiencing only the effect of her maternal love. Now Jesus Christ is the tender Father of the Christian family, wishing sincerely the salvation of all His children. However, in Him the two attributes of mercy and justice are equally to be acknowledged, so that He is both God of mercy and God of justice. Though we behold in Him the Son of God taking the form of a servant, and assuming our humanity, still we see in Him His divinity and infinite majesty, which terrifies. We see Him as our dear Father, but not without the robe of judge punishing the guilty children, so that a Christian heart feels for Jesus Christ a love mixed with fear and awe; not a pure love, not that love which a child feels in the bosom of his mother. Our Blessed Saviour, therefore, from the cross, wishing to give to Christians an object of love alone, without any mixture of fear, gave them Mary for their spiritual mother, in whose sweet maternity a Christian would find nothing but mere mercy, unaccompanied either by the fear of majesty (she not being God), nor by terror of judgment (she not being judge), but all meekness and compassion for all his miseries, and endowed with the power, by the virtue of her Divine Son, to succour him. Hence, a Christian throws himself at her feet with a full confidence to find in her peace, comfort, and pure love, without any hindrance whatever to follow its attractions. Hence, as the natural maternal love is truly congenial to the mind and heart of a sensible child, so the supernatural maternal love of Mary is truly congenial to the mind and heart of a sensible Christian.

Indeed, what is more natural for a child who finds himself in danger, than to run to its mother's arms? She is for him the harbour of salvation; he is sure through her protection to be free from all misfortunes. A Christian like-

wise, finding himself in danger of eternal damnation, having recourse with filial confidence to his compassionate Mother, is confident through her intercession to obtain from the good Father of the family the grace of salvation. If God has established in the order of nature such an impulse in children towards their natural mother, why should He not have fixed the same tendency in the supernatural order of grace? Undoubtedly we must admit it, since the supernatural order is infinitely more interesting for man's welfare than the natural, having relation to his eternal happiness. Indeed, there is not a dearer and more joyful and sweeter name than that of mother; the loving son feels it in his heart, and he is naturally carried to love her, and to put his trust in her. The same happens in spiritual concerns: a loving Christian feels in his heart the love for his spiritual mother, and he is supernaturally carried to love her and put in her his confidence. The natural instinct in him by the effect of grace is spiritualised, and produces in the spiritual order the same phenomena as are produced in the natural one. As God, being the Author of nature, has fixed a natural instinct between the mother and the child, so God as Author of grace has put a spiritual and supernatural instinct between the spiritual mother and her spiritual child. The first is carried naturally, the second supernaturally; but the force is the same; both must feel equally transported one towards the other. It may happen that a Christian feels moved towards his spiritual mother not so much as towards his carnal mother; and sometimes feels very little towards the former, while he strongly loves the latter; but the fault is his own, not of the grace, that is fit to make him feel the same instinct, nay, in a superior degree; as the spiritual, being of a superior order, must dominate over the natural, which is inferior to it.

This is so true that the very voice of nature calls for it. Indeed, the human heart has been created for love, and love is an act of our soul which unites us to those objects which we believe to be suitable to us. No man can be happy until he attains that object which he thinks will form his felicity. But no man, looking for such an object among the creatures of this world, has ever been able to find it. Although some-

times he thinks he has found it, his happiness does not last; he soon perceives that his heart cannot feel happy in the enjoyment of any creature of this world. There is no man so happy in this world as to have nothing left to hope for. The history of mankind for six thousand years testifies the existence of the fact. Even supposing that for a time some one would say, I am happy in the possession of a temporal thing, the consciousness of having to part with it ultimately at his death, makes him quite unhappy, so that in order to overcome his melancholy he is obliged to abstract his mind from the idea of death. This is testified by the Holy Ghost in the Book of Ecclesiasticus (xli. 1, 2) by these words: 'O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to man that hath peace in his possessions: to a man that is at rest, and whose ways have been prosperous in all things, and that is yet able to take meat!' Therefore, a wise Christian, desirous only of true felicity and happiness, does not look much for any object in this world on which he may place his affections, but carries his mind and his heart towards some object which can form his unending happiness. Such an object, in the first instance, is God; and in loving Him a Christian finds both temporal and eternal felicity. But after God, and our dear Redeemer Jesus Christ, this same happiness by the instinct of grace he finds in loving an object next to God, next to the Incarnate Son of God, which is Mary, as her love is not different from the love of God, but is substantially the same, so that a Christian, in loving Mary, experiences the same felicity found in loving God, so that he hears her sweet voice speaking gently to his heart and saying: 'Love me; I am the mother of fair love' (Eccl. xxiv. 24). Hence her loving client, by opening his heart to the influence of her maternal feelings, is naturally brought to love her in God, and so to enjoy all the peace which can possibly be found in this world, in anticipation of the eternal peace of heaven. St. Philip Neri by mere thinking of Mary was filled with the greatest consolation, and used to call her 'his delight, his consolation, his mamma;' but at the same time his love for her Divine Son was so great, that he often fell into ecstasies by the force of his love, so that by tenderly

loving the Mother, he strongly and ardently loved the Son.

Moreover, that the voice of nature really brings us to love Mary, is evident also from the reason, that our heart finds in Mary the *properties* of the *true good* conformable to our natural inclinations. Man indeed has been created by God to love good, as everyone experiences in himself. If sometimes he rejects what is good, it is not because he does not love it, but because he mistakes in the choice of the good; he chooses as a real good what is not so, elects a false good for the true one; and so erroneously thinks to be able to find in it his pleasure, his satisfaction, his felicity. Now, according to the doctrine of St. Thomas, man is brought to wish and covet good: first, when a thing is desirable for itself, for its own perfections, and it is called *good honest*; secondly, when the thing though not desirable for itself and its perfections, is nevertheless desirable as a means to reach the good we covet, and it is called *good useful*; thirdly, when our wishing finds in it peace and comfort, and it is called *good delectable*. Now we are carried to love Mary, because we find in her the three mentioned kinds of good. In the first place, she is desirable on account of her numberless most high perfections, by which she was adorned by God, and which make her to be amiable for herself, and thence she is an *honest* good. From what we have said in the foregoing chapters, and particularly in ix. and x., we think we have given full evidence of Mary being a creature really perfect for herself, on account of her gratuitous and sanctifying graces, so that she was an ocean of created perfections fit to be the living tabernacle of the Incarnate God, and as such she is worthy of all our love after the love we owe to God. Indeed, if love is in proportion to the quality of the good we love, and if after God there is no good more honest and perfect than Mary, our love towards her by a necessary consequence must be superior to the love of any other creature, and subordinate only to that of God. In the second place, Mary is discovered to us as a good desirable, on account of her being a *means* to reach the good we covet, and therefore she is a *useful good*. What is indeed the good

we covet? It is God, His grace, His glory. But Mary is appointed by Jesus Christ to be the means to reach such a good, as through her we may arrive at the possession both of divine grace and glory. Such is the mission of Mary, and it shall be demonstrated in the next chapter. We only observe here that Mary is the break of day, bringing the repenting sinner from the night of sin to the light of divine grace; she is the cloud of the New Testament which accompanies the Christian people to the possession of Paradise, as the cloud of old accompanied the people of Israel to the possession of the promised land; she is the polar star, which directs us to pass the stormy sea of this world, and arrive safely at the harbour of salvation; she is the new Moses, leader of the Christians, who by her praying and supplicating God, wards off the punishment we deserve, obtains mercy and pardon for us, procures a great felicity in dying, and an eternal reward in heaven. On this account Mary is indeed a very useful good for us. Lastly, Mary is for us a *delectable good*, which causes us the true peace of our soul. To form an idea of the peace of mind which is felt by a client of Mary, it would be necessary to interrogate and hear some one of the true lovers of Mary, as St. Bernard, who for his love towards Mary felt as it were a desire to be dissolved; or as St. Bernardine of Sienna, who used to call Mary his most pure and holy mistress; or as St. Stanislaus Kostka, and many others, who were attracted by the love of Mary as the iron is attracted by the loadstone, and were burned by her love as wood is burned by fire. When a Christian, satiated with the deceitful and fallacious goods and pleasures of this world, turns his heart towards Mary, or, oppressed and afflicted by misfortunes and sorrows of this earth, fixes his eyes even on a single picture of her, what comfort and consolation he feels! I remember having witnessed such an effect on a particular occasion, some time ago, when I visited a poor sick man in his dwelling. He had only a miserable room without any furniture; some old chairs put round alone formed the bedstead, upon it there was nothing but a mass of straw covered with an old sheet. Upon this he lay down with three little children. His face was pale and attenuated, more

through want of food than from the force of the illness; his children were likewise pale and without vigour through prolonged fasting; he had sold everything, even his trousers. Notwithstanding such a state of destitution, I saw at the foot of his bed a lamp burning before an image of the Blessed Virgin. The principal care of the poor man was that the said lamp should never be extinguished, so that in receiving alms his first care was to place away what was necessary to buy oil for the lamp, and the rest he used for the wants of himself and family; he preferred rather to prolong his fasting than to see the lamp go out. It is enough for our purpose to remark, that the love he had towards the Blessed Virgin caused him to bear up with enviable mildness and resignation all his miseries, so that, far from making any complaint, he thanked God and kissed the hand of Mary, that by this means his fidelity was proved; and in the midst of many distresses and pains he felt the greatest peace and comfort in his soul. But if he loved Mary, our Blessed Lady on her side never omitted to show her protection towards him. He assured me, that during the eight months his illness lasted, though deprived of all means of living, he experienced every day the effects of the providence of God. He had to pass sometimes the morning and the afternoon without a morsel of bread for himself and his family; but on the coming of the night, Providence did not fail. So it is with the true lovers of Mary, even in their most painful state of life, their hearts are kept always in great peace and tranquillity. And how sweet and calm is the death of a true lover of Mary! It becomes the messenger of glad tidings! Father Suarez, a celebrated theologian of the Society of Jesus, who was so devout and so loving a client of Mary during his life, finding himself at the point of death, said to those around him, 'I did not believe that dying was so sweet a thing as I feel!' Also another great lover of Mary, in his last moments, said to Father Benedetti of the same order, who assisted him, 'My father, I should like that you could know how great is my joy now for having served and loved sweet Mary in my lifetime! I am unable to express to you my peace and joy at this moment.' Therefore let the



reader put himself to the task by loving Mary, by having her peculiarly dear to his heart, and he will soon experience how full of suavity it is, and how congenial it is to his mind and heart. Moreover, in loving the Mother, as has been observed before, he will not fail to love the Son, as these two are inseparable loves. But without making a trial, his mind can form no idea of its sweetness, and his heart cannot feel happy. Happiness is only the effect of experience.

2. *From the Early Fathers of the Church, as Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

Clement of Alexandria (Pædagogus, l. i. c. vi.) shows to us the Blessed Virgin as an influential element in the economy of human salvation, so that she not only brought to us the Divine Redeemer, but moreover she daily presents Him to the faithful as a precious milk which keeps supernatural life. Here are his words: 'O unheard-of wonder! The Father of all things is one; the Word of all things is one; the Holy Ghost is one and the same everywhere. The Virgin Mother is likewise one, and I most joyfully call her Church! . . . She is virgin and mother; she is an immaculate virgin and loving mother; she calls her children about her, and feeds them with a holy milk of the Word her infant. . . . With this she nourishes the new generation that our Lord had brought forth in the anguish of His passion, and that He tied with the bands of His precious blood.

St. Peter Chrysologus (Serm. xcix. de Parab. Ferm., Patrol. t. cii. p. 477, Migne) says: 'The woman received from God the ferment of faith after having received from the devil the ferment of perfidy. She concealed it in the three measures, viz. in three epochs, from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Moses, from Moses to Christ; so that the woman who corrupted the whole of mankind by the ferment of death in Adam, might renew all our flesh in Christ by the ferment of the resurrection; and the woman who made the bread of groans and pain might also make the bread of life and salvation, so as to become, through Christ, a true mother of all living, that one who in Adam had been the mother of all

the dead. To this effect Christ came into this world, that as death through Eve passed into all men, so through Mary might return life to all.'

St. James of Sarug (pp. 205, 206) says: 'The dignity of Mary so much affects my mind, that it is but with astonishment that I undertake to praise her. It is the Holy Virgin herself who invites me to-day to celebrate her praise. She is the second heaven in whose womb dwelt the Most High, and from which He was brought forth to dissipate the darkness of the world. She is the most blessed among women, through whom the malediction of the earth has been taken away, and the sentence of condemnation has been abolished. She is chaste, modest, and embellished with every species of sanctity, so that I feel myself unfit to speak in her commendation. The daughter of poverty became the Mother of the King of kings, and brought to the needy world life-giving riches. She is the ship which brings from the paternal house treasures and blessings, and introduces abundance into our desolate region. She is the good field which, without being sown, brings forth an accumulation of fruits which multiply without being ploughed. She is the second Eve who brought forth life amongst mortals, and broke and destroyed the chirographus of Eve her mother. This maid offered her hand to the former maid, who was putten down in order to lift her up from the ruin into which the serpent had pushed her. She is the daughter who wove the stole of glory to be offered as a garment to her parent after his being ignominiously deprived of it between the trees. She is that magnificent palace constructed by the King, into which He entered, which He inhabited, the gates of which, when He went out, were not opened. This maid, like a celestial car, carried and kept that hero who feeds the creatures. She is that spouse who conceived without having seen the spouse, and brought forth the Infant without father. But the image of her beauty is so sublime and glorious, that I am unable to give even a faint idea of it. It would be more easy to paint the sun with its light and heat, than to describe the history of Mary: her praise is superior to the skill even of the most eloquent among men.'

3. *From Christian Archæology.*

As in the preceding chapters, in confirmation of the truth we have defended, we brought monuments from early antiquity, so in the present chapter we bring forth some of the ninth century, to give our readers an opportunity of seeing that devotion towards the Blessed Mother of God in this late epoch was the same as before. Hence we exhibit in fig. 70

FIG. 70.



a mosaic described by Agincourt (vol. vi. tav. 17, fig. 13), as follows: 'The Virgin is richly dressed according to the Greek school of the ninth century, having in her arms her Divine Son Jesus, and at each side four figures of the apostles. Mosaic of the apsis of the choir of St. Maria Maggiore at Rome, executed in the year 848.'

By fig. 71 we exhibit a mosaic described by Ciampini (*Vetera Monumenta*, tom. ii. p. 143), and representing the Blessed Virgin with her Divine Child, taken from the apsis of St. Maria in Dominica at Rome, of the year 813.

The fig. 72, borrowed from the same antiquary (pars ii. p. 149, tab. ii.), is another mosaic, taken from the Chapel of St. Zenone, in the Church of St. Prassede in Rome, made in

the year 819. The figure at the right is St. Prassede, and at the left St. Pudenziana.

By fig. 73 we exhibit from Ciampini (tom. ii. tav. 20,

FIG. 71.



p. 168) a picture of our Blessed Lady from the Church of Santa Maria Nuova, of Rome, executed in the year 848.

The fig. 74 is borrowed from Agincourt (vol. iv. tav. 12, fig. 16), and is a diptycon, described by him as follows: 'The

**Virgin with her Infant, sitting between two cherubim, being a portion of a diptycon of the Monastery d'Arabona, in the Marca of Ancona, made in the year 883.'**

FIG. 72.



The said diptycon affords us occasion to mention, that in the primitive Church, through fear that the images of our Saviour, the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints, if painted on

the wall, would be exposed to the insults and affronts of the Pagans, it was the custom of the Christians to have the

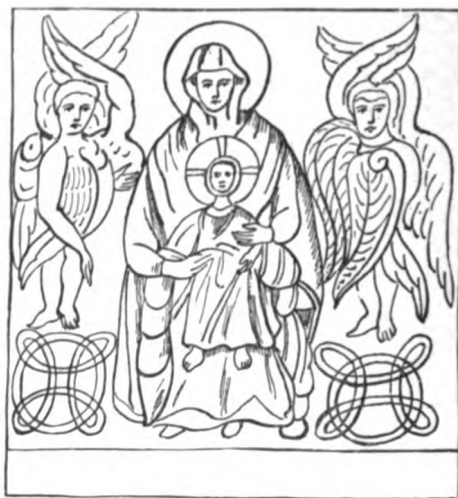
FIG. 73.



images painted in the diptycons, so that they might be easily concealed and brought from one place to another. And

this is the reason why the ancient pictures were not so numerous as they might be; and for this very reason the Illiberitanus Synod (Can. xxxi.) enacted, ‘Placuit in Ecclesia picturas esse non debere, ne quod colitur aut adoratur in parietibus depingatur.’ The said Synod did not forbid the use of images, as the Iconoclasts presumed to infer, but only wanted to remove the danger of the pictures being profaned by the enemies of the Christian religion. Buonaruoti (*Osserv. sopra i Vasi Antichi di Vetro*, p. 259, Firenze, 1716), observes that the use of the diptycons was very ancient in the Church,

FIG. 74.



saying: ‘By considering that there is no record in antiquity of the beginning of the use of the sacred images before the altars, we have a strong argument of its antiquity, particularly when the images were expressed in the diptycons. Indeed the custom of these was very properly introduced, on account of the necessity the ancient Christians had to change often the churches, and other places appointed for their religious meeting, so that if the images had been painted on the walls, it would have been impossible to transfer them elsewhere, besides the inconvenience of their being subjected to the outrages of the Gentiles.’

SECTION II.

PROTESTANT AND SCHISMATIC EVIDENCE.

BISHOP BULL, 'Of the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin' (Catholic Safeguards, t. ii. p. 266), explaining St. Irenæus, says: 'The Holy Virgin was the happy instrument of the saving Incarnation of the Son of God, who had effectually crushed the old serpent the devil, and destroyed his power over all those that believed in Himself, and thereby she became the instrument of comfort to Eve and to all other sinners.'

John Ecolampadius, 'Serm. de Laudando in Maria Deo,' says: 'Never, I hope, will it ever be heard of me, that I am against Mary, as I judge it to be a certain sign of a reprobate mind not to be well inclined towards her. She is over all the rest queen of all; she has been honoured by God in preference to everyone; there is no other like her. What is wanting in her to prove that she is pre-eminently distinguished?'

Bishop Hall, 'The Old Religion' (chap. xiv.), says: 'It will be easily granted that the Blessed Virgin is the prime of all saints; neither could it be that any other of the heavenly society should have precedence of her.'

Bishop Pearson, 'Exposit. of the Creed' (p. 178, London, 1692), says: 'We cannot bear too reverent a regard unto the Mother of our Lord, so long as we give her not that worship which is due unto the Lord Himself. Let us keep the language of the Primitive Church: let her be honoured and esteemed; let Him be worshipped and adored.'

Photius, the great leader of the Greek schism, on the festival of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, speaks thus: 'But thou, O Blessed Virgin and Mother of the eternal Lord, our propitiation and refuge, interceding for us with thy Son and our God, and approaching Him as our mediatrix, vouchsafe to render us, your panegyrists, fit to be admitted to the celestial nuptials.'

Mrs. Jameson (in the Introduction to her work, p. xviii.), says: 'That the veneration paid to Mary in the early Church



was a very natural feeling in those who advocated the Divinity of her Son, would be granted, I suppose, by all but the most bigoted Reformers. . . . How it extended from the East over the nations of the West, how it grew and spread, may be read in ecclesiastical history; everywhere it seems to have found in the human heart some deep sympathy—deeper far than mere theological doctrine could reach—ready to accept it.’ And (page xli.) she borrows from antiquity the personal description of Mary: ‘She was of a middle stature; her face oval, her eyes brilliant and of an olive tint, but her eyebrows arched and black; her hair was of a pale brown; her complexion fair as wheat. She spoke little, but she spoke freely and affably; she was not troubled in her speech, but grave, courteous, and tranquil. Her dress was without ornament, and in her deportment was nothing lax or feeble. To this ancient description of her person and manners we have to add the scriptural and popular portrait of her mind—the gentleness, the purity, the intellectual power and fortitude, the gifts of a poetess and prophetess: the humility in which she exceeded all women. Lastly, we are to engraft on these personal and moral qualities the attributes which the Church from early times has assigned to her, the supernatural endowments which raised her above the angels and men—all these were to be combined into one glorious type of perfection.’ The same authoress (p. 58), feeling in herself what we maintain, that veneration and confidence towards the Mother of God are congenial to the human mind and heart, says: ‘When the glorified type of what is purest, loftiest, holiest in womanhood, stands before us arrayed in all the majesty and beauty that accomplished art inspired by faith and love could lend her, and bearing her Divine Son rather enthroned than sustained on her maternal bosom, we look, and the heart is in heaven! and it is difficult, very difficult, to refrain from an “*Ora pro nobis*” (Pray for us).’

## CHAPTER XIX.

MARY STANDS IN HEAVEN BEFORE HER DIVINE SON, PLEADING  
THE CAUSE OF HER NEEDY CLIENTS IN THIS WORLD.

## SECTION I.

## CATHOLIC EVIDENCE.

1. *From Holy Scriptures.*

ACCORDING to the Protestant doctrine, God does not admit any intercessory office on the part of the saints, on the plea that it is both useless and unscriptural, nay, offensive to God Himself, to apply to them. Besides, they ask, how do the saints hear our prayers? How have they the power of interceding for us? How do we know that they are willing to pray for us? How may we presume that a wretched sinner could be heard by them? And in particular with regard to the Blessed Virgin Mary, they in general are scandalized at beholding the worship of the Virgin, and say that the glory given to her is confounded with the glory due to God, so that the creature is made equal, if not superior, to the Creator.

Now, in order to reach the aim we propose in the present chapter, which is to show that Mary stands in Heaven before her Divine Son pleading the cause of her needy clients in this world—we think it proper to proceed by taking into examination all the said difficulties, and by giving them a proper answer, to ground the truth of our thesis upon the ruins of the confuted errors.

I. We begin by answering the first difficulty, with regard to the worship due to God alone, and say that in the Intro-

duction to this work we gave, as we presume, a clear idea of the worship due to God, to the Blessed Virgin, and the other saints; we made there an obvious distinction between the worship given to God and that given to the Blessed Virgin and to the other saints, and said that supreme and absolute worship is given only to God, and that a far inferior and subordinate worship is given respectively to the Blessed Virgin and other saints. We showed that the Catholic Church never adored the Blessed Virgin, nor gave her any such attributes as belong alone to God. Indeed, in the Catechism set forth by order of the Council of Trent, all pastors are ordered to teach their flocks the difference between praying to God and invoking the saints. We beseech God that He Himself would give us good things, and deliver us from the evil ones. But of the saints we beg, as they are God's favourites, they would become our patrons, and obtain of God, by their prayer and intercession, the things we want. Hence we use two different ways of praying: we properly say to God, 'Have mercy on us;' and to a saint, 'Pray for us that God may have mercy on us.' Conformably to this doctrine, we maintain that the worship due to God does not forbid having recourse to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and of the other saints. Indeed, if God would not admit of the intercessory office of Mary and other saints, He certainly would not have heard the prayers, nor granted the graces which were asked by the saints, as by granting such graces He would have approved and sanctioned a damnable practice. But the fact shows just the contrary, inasmuch as God wished to grant graces through the mediation of the saints, even in the state of pilgrims on this earth, as clearly appears from Holy Scripture. While Moses was on Mount Sinai conversing with God, the Hebrew people, impatient at his delay in coming down from the mount, made a calf and adored it as their god. On account of this impiety, God, justly irritated, wanted to exterminate so unfaithful and rebellious a people. Moses, however, interposed himself between God and His people, supplicated the Lord in their behalf, and obtained their pardon. Aaron likewise becomes a sinner; God wishes to put him to death,

but at the prayers of Moses God's wrath is appeased, and Aaron is spared. The explorers of the promised land having exaggerated the difficulties of that conquest, the people rebelled against Moses, and refused to obey him. On account of this, God is determined to send a pestilence as a punishment to them; but Moses interposing again with God, his prayer disarms God's wrath, and no pestilence is sent. Now, if God granted so many graces in consideration of the intercessory office of Moses, yet a pilgrim on the earth, and being only His servant, will He not grant graces to us in consideration of the interposition of Mary, His Mother in heaven?

But the desire of God to grant graces through His saints, will appear more evident from what we read in the Book of Job (chap. xiii.). Three friends of Job—Elifaz, Baldad, and Sophar—had offended God by their detractions against Job. God under a cloud spoke to them, and reproaching them with their sin, said to them: 'Take seven bulls, and seven rams, and go to Job my servant, and while you offer for yourselves these animals in holocaust, Job will pray for you, and I will have regard to him, and will favourably hear him, to the end that your imprudence be not imputed to you.' They obeyed the command of the Lord, Job prayed for them, and their sin was pardoned. From this fact, it appears evident that God wishes to be supplicated by His saints, and that He is disposed through them to grant His graces in favour of sinners. At the prayers of Abraham, Sodom would have been spared if only ten just men had been found in the Pentapolis. In Ezekiel (chap. xxii. 29, 30), we read: 'The people of the land used oppression and committed robbery: they afflicted the needy and the poor, and they oppressed the stranger by calumny without judgment. And I sought among them for a man that might set up a hedge and stand in the gap before me, in favour of the land that I might not destroy it, and I found none.' Could God express a stronger desire of granting graces through the saints? Like instances of applying to the intercession of the living are found in the new dispensation. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans (xv. 30), to the Ephesians (vi. 18), and to

the Thessalonians (v. 25), solicited the prayers of the faithful of the said churches. From the Acts (xii. 5), likewise it is clear that while St. Peter was imprisoned, the Church prayed fervently and constantly for him. It is therefore holy and wholesome also under the new dispensation to have recourse to the intercession of the living, so that it may please God to grant graces at their solicitation.

Let us pass now to observe some instances of graces solicited and obtained through the intercession of the angels and saints after death. We read in Zechariah (ch. i.), that the angel of God interceded in behalf of Jerusalem, and Juda. In Daniel (viii. 16; ix. 21; x. 15; xii. 1), the angels are often mentioned as having been solicitous and anxious for the men of this world. In the Book of Tobias (xii. 12 and 13), the archangel Raphael is reported as saying to Tobias, 'When thou didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner and hide by day the dead in thine house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayer to the Lord, and because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee.' The Lord said to Ezechias: 'I will protect this town, and will save it, on account of my servant David.' (4 Reg. xix. 34.) Indeed, in that very night the angel of God killed 185,000 Assyrians belonging to the empire of the impious Sennacherib, and Jerusalem, without making any defence, was saved. In the Second Book of Maccabees (xv.), it is related that Onias in a vision to Judas Maccabeus, showing him Jeremiah the prophet, said: 'This is the lover of his brethren, and of the people of Israel; this is he that prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy city, Jeremiah, the prophet of God.' Whereupon Jeremiah stretched forth his right hand, and gave to Judas a sword of God, saying: 'Take this holy sword, a gift from God wherewith thou shalt overthrow the adversaries of my people Israel.' The effect of the prayer of Jeremiah was the total defeat of the adversaries, with the death of Nicanor. (We quote the books of Tobias and of the Maccabees, as historical records of the usages and prevalent tradition among the Jews, and as such we presume that they will be admitted even by Protestants.)

The Books of the New Testament are consonant with the doctrine of the Jewish Church. In St. Luke (xv. 7, 10) is mentioned the rejoicing of the angels at the conversion of a sinner. In St. Matthew the angels are named as taking care of the little ones, who are not to be despised, because they always behold the face of God. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 14) also mention is made of the angels deputed to promote the salvation of the elect: 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them, who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?' In the Acts (x. 4) it is related that Cornelius, through an angel, was assured that his prayers and alms were accepted by God: 'Thy prayers and thy alms have ascended as a memorial in the sight of God.' In the Apocalypse (v. 8; viii. 3, 4) it is related, not only that the angels are offering before the throne of God the prayers of men, but also that the four-and-twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having everyone of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.

Now, if God is pleased with being supplicated for graces, not only by angels and saints of heaven, but also by saints still pilgrims on this earth; and if at the request of His servants God grants graces, shall we suppose that He would not be inclined to hear His beloved Mother's prayer, and grant her what she asks? Could we say that it is against His will that His Mother should be intercessor with Him for us, by praying for us? We do not say that Mary by nature, and by her own power, may give graces to us; we only say that she is powerful in Heaven, by the will of God, to obtain grace through prayer and supplication. It is also understood that she obtains everything which is conformable with the will of God, which she knows very well, and she would not interpose in a thing which would not be in accordance with the Divine Will. The Catholic Church, which in doctrine and in essential points of discipline, has been always firm and consistent, has always taught in Rome, as well as in England, in Germany, in America, and everywhere, that Jesus Christ is the only Spring of Grace and Author of Salvation, and that Mary is only the channel through which come down the graces of God solicited by

her. To grant graces is only in the power of the Son ; to obtain them is the privilege of the Mother. Jesus Christ, in the institution of the sacraments, given to us as the means of sanctification and salvation, wished that they should be administered by His ministers, so that through His ministers the souls of the faithful might be sanctified. He could, of course, sanctify the souls directly by Himself, by His immediate action ; nevertheless, he preferred that this should be done through the instrumentality of His ministers. In like manner, though He could, and might, give us any graces immediately and directly by Himself, and He does it ; yet it is pleasing to Him to give us His graces particularly through His beloved Mother's agency, in order that He may give her honour, and that she should be honoured by us. Indeed, St. Thomas (in 4 Sent. Dist. xlv. q. 3, art. 2) teaches that though God is infinitely more merciful and inclined to hear our prayers than any of the saints, nevertheless He wishes that we should have recourse also to the intercession of the saints, for the sake of maintaining the order of producing effects, not by the immediate action of His own omnipotence, but by the operation of creatures, or secondary causes ; and this not only in the natural, but also in the supernatural order, in which God sanctifies the souls of men, not by His own immediate action, but by that of His ministers. Mary, therefore, is to be considered as a secondary cause, through whose agency God wishes to dispense to men the graces which Jesus Christ has merited for them. When Queen Esther presented herself before King Assuerus, (Esther iv.), the king asked her tenderly what she wished. 'What is thy request ?' The queen replied, 'O king, give me the lives of my people, for whom I implore thy mercy.' Assuerus, without hesitation, granted her request, and immediately revoked the sentence of death pronounced against the Jews. Now, if King Assuerus, through love for Esther, granted her the salvation of her people, how can it be supposed that God, who loved His Mother with an infinite love, and has caused her to be the instrument of reconciliation and grace to fallen man, should not be willing to grant her request ? Such a supposition would be injurious to Jesus Christ, who ex-

pressly declared that He wished not the death of a sinner, but rather his conversion and his return to Him, in order to restore to him the life of grace which he had lost, so that He is very much pleased when His beloved Mother intercedes for the return of sinners to His paternal bosom. Indeed, if Jesus Christ complied with His Mother's wishes at the marriage feast of Cana, by working a miracle, before she was appointed by Him in a public form, as He did on the cross, to be the spiritual mother of Christians, how much more willingly must she be heard by Him now, since on Calvary He conferred on her such an office! If her Son worked that miracle in circumstances so unfavourable in regard to the order of Providence, how much more easily will He grant her prayers now that the proper time has come! If by working that miracle, at the intercession of Mary, the conversion of men occurred, as is related in the Gospel, will He not now, through the same Holy Virgin, convert men from sin to righteousness, from vice to virtue? The dignity, indeed, of Mother of God, and mother of men, is a guarantee for us to obtain spiritual favours from God, through her intercession. St. Jerome (Tract. cont. Vigil.) says: 'If the apostles and martyrs, while still in the body, and obliged to be solicitous for themselves, could pray for others, how much more can they do so now, after having gained the victory, the crown, the triumph? Have they less power now that they are in the company of Christ?' This reasoning is much more conclusive with regard to the Blessed Virgin-Mother of God and men. If she was so powerful on this earth with her Divine Son, how much more so must she be now in heaven, being in glory so near to Him? Hence the holy Church, in the 'Hail, Mary,' after the words of the angelical salutation, and those of St. Elizabeth, added, 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death;' which words are to be traced as far back as the Council of Ephesus, and show the belief and practice of the Christian Church, at that early period, in reference to her intercessory office.

II. The intercessory office of Mary towards her clients being established, the question comes, How does she know



their prayers? The answer is found in the already adduced passages of Holy Writ. We have seen that, while Tobias was praying and exercising works of mercy, the angel Raphael offered them to God. But how did the angel know the prayers and good works of Tobias? How did the four-and-twenty elders spoken of in the Apocalypse know the prayers of the saints, to offer them before the Lamb? How can the passage in St. Luke (xv. 7) be explained, 'There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that does penance'? How do the angels know of the conversion of sinners, which they must, in order to rejoice for it? If they know of the repentance of a sinner, they have no less knowledge of our requests to them to pray for us. Of course they cannot have such a knowledge by their own power, and therefore they must know it by Divine power. Now, if the angels of Paradise have from God the gift of seeing what is done in this world, could we suppose that Mary would not have such a privilege, who is above all angels and saints in Paradise? If she is endowed by her Divine Son with all gifts and privileges granted to any other creature (as already has been fully demonstrated), will she not have this one? Therefore we are to conclude that Mary, like the angels, may, and does in a still more distinct manner, see and know perfectly, in God, all our prayers. This objection is not new, nor was it produced for the first time by Calvin and his associates; but it was made even in the early ages of Christendom, and since that time has always been refuted and condemned. Severianus Gabalitanus, contemporary with St. John Chrysostom (Serm VI. de Mundi Opificio inter Opp. S. Joan Chrys. tom. vi. p. 639), after saying that Mary should be blessed by all generations, asks: 'But what profit to her (you say) if she does not hear?' and answers: 'But she does hear, and hears very well, because she is the Mother of salvation and of light, and finds herself in a place shining and refulgent.' To those who said that the martyrs had no knowledge of what passes in this world, Theodoretus (adv. Gent. lib. viii. tav. 4, lib. ii. p. 911) answered that they were very wrong in maintaining such an error, because the martyrs find themselves in a divine and most blessed condition; and he adds,

‘We must confess that we do not know in what way, or by what means the Blessed Virgin and other saints are aware of our prayers and wants; but the ignorance of the way of knowing a thing does not risk its existence.’ The incapacity, therefore, of explaining how the Blessed Virgin knows our requests cannot give room to deny the existence and reality of the dogma of the intercession of saints. If, for believing the mysteries of religion, it should be necessary to know how such a thing happens, it would follow that we should disbelieve even the mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity, the real presence in the Eucharist, and so on. Therefore, as we are obliged to believe in the said mysteries, although they are incomprehensible to us, so we must believe that the Blessed Virgin knows our prayers and wants, although we do not understand the way. In conclusion, let us hear St. Augustine on this subject. After observing that the saints know of our supplications, either through the ministry of the angels, or through their having a special power from God to know of themselves what is done in this world, or their being able to see all things in God, he says: ‘It is certain that they help us; but how they do it, I do not presume to define’ (*de Cura pro Mortuis gerenda*, cap. xvi. p. 293). We therefore repeat, with the same holy father, it is certain that Mary hears our prayers and sees our wants, though we do not know by what means. The doctrine of the Catholic Church as to the invocation of saints is this: ‘The saints are qualified to be honoured and invoked, that they may offer up their prayers for us, and their prayers are beneficial and profitable to us.’ So the Council of Trent.

III. Mary knowing in God our prayers, and having the power to intercede for us, it is further necessary to investigate if she really wishes to interpose her good offices on our behalf. We have already mentioned that the Blessed Virgin, by commission from Jesus Christ, was raised to the office of mother of the Christians, and she accepted it, and engaged herself with maternal affection in our behalf, and contributed as far as she could in the work of our redemption. Being now in heaven, she has not given up that engagement; nay, she is in a better position to fulfil it, and feels therefore

greatly for our spiritual welfare. Indeed charity and beneficence towards our neighbour is in proportion to the charity and love one has towards God ; so much so, that the more a soul loves God, the more she loves her neighbours, and takes interest in them. The love of God and the love of our neighbour, says St. Thomas, are not two distinct virtues, but are one and the same virtue. Hence, the more the love of God reigns in a soul, the greater in it is the love towards the neighbour. Now, who can say how great was the love of Mary towards God ? It was most ardent and without any interruption, so that she arrived at the love of God in such a high degree as no created being had obtained. And her love in Heaven is superior to that of all the saints, and even above that of all the seraphim together. The consequence is, that her love towards God having been, and being exceedingly above the love of any and all other creatures, her love towards us is exceedingly great, and her desire of benefiting us is immense. And this is the doctrine also of St. Augustine, who says that as Mary is superior to all the saints in sanctity, so also is she superior to all in her solicitude for us. If she had in this world a truly compassionate maternal heart towards the needy, the same affection being improved in heaven, makes her very solicitous for her spiritual children, so that she cannot help seeing their spiritual miseries without hastening to act on their behalf. This is the doctrine of the fathers of the Church, so enlightened by the Holy Ghost, who were given to be the guides and masters of the Church, the witnesses of the biblical and traditional doctrines, and whose unanimous consent in matters of faith and morality forms an object of Divine faith. Accordingly the Church, our mistress, in the Litany, calls Mary, Virgin most powerful, most merciful, cause of our joy, gate of heaven, refuge of sinners, comforter of the afflicted, and help of Christians.

IV. It may be objected by some, that though Mary hears our prayers, and has the power and the wish of obtaining from her Divine Son what we desire, in order to gain our eternal salvation, still she is ready to do so only towards those who have been always her faithful servants, or at least

have been truly converted; but with regard to those Christians who are not truly converted, who are addicted to worldly pleasures, who are still passionate, and fall very often into the same disorders and sins, it seems that the Blessed Virgin will not interest herself for them, and therefore it would be useless for them to apply to her. However, dear reader, supposing that you should find yourself so grievously infirm with such a complication of diseases, as to render your cure very doubtful, tell me, would you not in so fearful a case call a doctor to try if he could succeed in rescuing you from such a dangerous state? I think that although you had much apprehension about the result of the cure, nevertheless you would not omit to make a trial by using such natural means as might be fit for your recovery. Why, then, will you not make a trial to cure your spiritual disease, and accordingly have recourse to your spiritual Mother? She, through the light of God, knows better the spiritual diseases than a human doctor knows, or is able to know, natural disorders. Perhaps she may find the proper remedy for your cure. Nay, she has already got it from the pharmacy of the unexhausted mercy of God. The state of general disorder under which you believe yourself to be suffering, is not a reason for her not taking you under her care. She is a mother and a doctress, and mothers do not refuse to take care of their children, even when afflicted with contagious and incurable diseases; nay, the more the state of a child is desperate, the more the mother's love is solicitous for him. Remember that a mother is allowed to intervene with the father of a family in favour of the dissolute and wicked children, and she does not refuse to do so. Shall we suppose that Mary, who feels so tenderly for her spiritual children, could refuse it? Therefore, if you would make trial of the cure of your spiritual disorders, and ensure your eternal happiness, apply confidently to Mary, who is the Mother of the Omnipotent, and as such may obtain from Him, on your behalf, His omnipotent grace, by which you may become also in a moment a true convert, and vessel of election, as was the case with St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Mary of Egypt, St. Margaret of Cortona, and thousands upon thousands

more. Thus you have no reason to despair of being cured. If you are even the most reprobate sinner, remember that our Blessed Lord came into the world purposely to redeem you, and recover the lost sheep that you are. Mary considers sinners as the price of the blood of her Divine Son who shed it for them, and hence she looks upon your salvation as upon the life of her Son; she loves you because she loves Him, and she wishes by your conversion to please Him, as well as all the angels and saints in Paradise, who wish to rejoice at your conversion. Why, then, do you not run to your compassionate, solicitous, and merciful Mother? Her heart is ever open to you.

V. Lastly, in consideration of so many high praises and titles given to Mary both by the Fathers and the Church, it may be said that the glory of Mary is confounded with the glory of God; that the creature is made equal to the Creator, and that therefore the veneration paid to Mary is injurious to the dignity of God. We shall now proceed to answer this difficulty by making a comparison on this subject furnished by the Book of Genesis. In it we read that God made two great lights; a greater light to rule the day, and a lesser one to rule the night. Jesus Christ is the Sun of Justice, the splendour of eternal light, light of light, which dwells in inaccessible light, the cause of all light in all intellectual creation. The Blessed Virgin Mary, in consideration of her high dignity and supernatural acquirements, is styled the *moon* in its fulness of splendour in a clear night—‘*pulchra ut Luna.*’ Hence, with the exception of the humanity of the Divine Word, Mary was predestined before all other creatures to be the chief luminary of the Christian world, commanding all respect and admiration above every other luminous body, and destined to be in the Church what the moon is in the material world, diffusing her light to all travellers in the night of this world, dissipating the darkness of error and sin, and by the splendour of her virtues showing the right path to heaven. However, the moon, though so glorious and benignant a planet, and deservedly admired by all for its grandeur and beauty, is by its nature an opaque body, having no light of its own, so that all its beauty and brightness are derived from the sun, which communicates to it its splendour.

The moon, therefore, is shining because it is clothed with the light of the sun. In like manner, our Blessed Lady, although so brilliant in the light of so many graces and gratuitous gifts, being a mere creature, none of her endowments are her own, but all are received from God, though by her faithful correspondence with favours and graces received from Him, she has made herself worthy and deserving of being greatly rewarded with these graces. As at the appearance of the sun upon the horizon the light of the moon gradually disappears, so when Jesus Christ is put in comparison with His Blessed Mother, the beauty of Mary no longer shines of itself, but is commingled and blended with the glory of her Divine Son; so much so that all the greatness of Mary is but the greatness of Jesus Christ upon her in the most unbounded plenitude, even as far as a mere creature is capable of receiving it. Hence the devotional expressions employed by the holy fathers and by the Church in praise of Mary are necessarily qualified, and taken in the sense of participating in the beauty and greatness of God. As we admire the splendour of the moon, while we are dazzled with the glory of the sun, so in praising Mary we give all praise to God, who is the Author of all that is glorious and praiseworthy; and the more Mary is honoured and respected, the more is God glorified and adored in her. Jesus Christ, far from being offended by the praises given to His beloved Mother, is, on the contrary, pleased, and regards the honour paid to her as His own. No one, then, out of respect for Jesus Christ should fear to be devout to His Blessed Mother. The splendour of the moon reflects her glory on the sun. The devotion to the Blessed Virgin is, as it were, the preface to the piety towards our Lord and the introduction to His love. Through the sweet milk of filial love to the Mother we pass to the strong bread of the love of the Son. It has been already observed, that it was through Mary the Jews and the Gentiles came to know and love Jesus Christ; she presented Him both to the shepherds and to the Magi. Moreover, as in the firmament the presence of the moon does not interfere with the presence of the sun, nor interrupt the harmony subsisting between them; so in heaven the intercessory office

of Mary does not interrupt or interfere with the mediatorship of Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church maintains with St. Paul that there is but 'one Mediator of Redemption between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself up as a ransom for all' (Tim. ii. 5). But the same Catholic Church proclaims with the same Apostle, that there are also mediators of intercession with God and Jesus Christ. Mary is the first to hold that office. While the Divine Son intercedes for us with His Heavenly Father, Mary intercedes for us with her beloved Son, who is willing to be supplicated by her, and to grant His favours through her. The intercessory office of the mother of a family is by no means injurious or derogatory to the father's authority, because it is his wish that through the influence of the mother he should hear the petitions of the children; so that the intercessory office of Mary in favour of her spiritual children, far from being injurious to her Divine Son, or derogatory to the authority of God, is, on the contrary, conformable to His merciful wishes for the welfare of Christians. Of course, as has been already observed, Mary has no grace of her own to give us—the only source of grace being from God. But on account of her exalted dignity and super-eminent virtues, she has deserved of her Divine Son, out of regard for men redeemed by His precious blood, to have conferred upon her such an influence and a power over His Divine heart as to have granted to her all her petitions. The moon being between the sun and the earth, reflects to the latter what it receives from the former; in like manner Mary receives the celestial effusions of graces from the Divine Son in order to transfer them to us who are on this earth. When Bethsabee came to King Solomon to speak to him in favour of Adonias, the king arose to meet her, and bowed to her, and sat down upon his throne, and a throne was set for the king's mother, and she sat upon his right hand; and she said to him, 'I desire one small petition of thee; do not put me to confusion. And the king said to her, Mother, ask; for I must not turn away thy face.' In like manner, nay, in a manner more loving and gracious, the Son of God, turning to Mary, says, 'My Mother, ask; for I

must not turn away thy face.' Indeed, how can Jesus Christ turn away from the face of His Mother, who gave Him her pure blood to form His body, who brought Him forth from the enclosure of her chaste womb, carried Him so carefully in her arms, nourished Him with her virginal milk, caused Him to sleep softly on her bosom, and for thirty years looked after Him and attended Him with so much love and diligence? Could He forget that it was through her that He escaped from the hands of Herod? that it was she who guarded Him in pagan Egypt? that it was she who saved Him from all dangers? and by her that He was attended on Calvary, when He gave up His life for our salvation? These and other eloquent remembrances and considerations indelibly impressed on the mind of the Man-God, who always felt so tenderly for His Mother, cannot fail not only to dispose Him to hear her applications, but even to anticipate her wishes and grant them. Indeed, was it possible that her beloved Son, who for thirty years always heard the maternal voice and never opposed it, would not now hear and grant her prayer? To think otherwise, it would follow that Jesus Christ in heaven has no gratitude, no love for His Mother, which would imply a want of perfection, an implication most impious and injurious to God. Indeed, if the name of mother is so sweet and eloquent for all good children, how far more sweet and eloquent must it be for the best of the sons of men, the holiest of them, the most affectionate of all, the Man-God! Is it possible that Mary, whose name is associated with so many great personal qualifications, should not obtain, by her intercessory office, a gracious acceptance and the granting of her petitions? If the Thecuite, being the type of Mary, was able to reconcile a disobedient and contumacious son to his justly angered father, shall not Mary be able to reconcile to God a repentant sinner? If Abigail, another type of Mary, by her interposition between King David and Nabal obtained pardon for him, confessing that it was true that Nabal acted wrongly and unjustly, but that the king would forgive him in regard to her servant who hoped to obtain such a grace, how then shall Mary not be able to obtain the graces she



asks for her servants, in consideration of her exalted dignity and merits? If Esther, a new type of Mary, before King Assuerus, obtains (as has been already observed) the repeal of the sentence of death with regard to all the Jewish people of Persia, shall Mary not be able to obtain both spiritual and temporal graces on behalf, not only of special petitioners, but also of whole towns and kingdoms? Is this not a privilege belonging to her who, amongst the pure creatures, is the greatest luminary of Paradise? If the first minister and dignitary in a temporal kingdom is considered the most proper person to solicit favours from the Sovereign, will Mary not be considered the proper and fit person in the kingdom of heaven to present there, before the throne of the Most High, both public and private supplications, and obtain for us the graces we require? It is for these reasons that, in the *Salve Regina*, we say, 'Rise, glorious advocate . . . and obtain for us . . . to see thy Infant Jesus and with Him to reign.' In the *Ave, Maris Stella*, we pray, 'Exert a mother's care, to Him convey our prayers who chose to be thy Son.' Likewise, in all the public prayers of the Mass, the Blessed Virgin is invariably invoked in the same way. The prayer for the season of Advent—*Deus, qui de Beata*—ends thus: 'Grant, O God, that we may be aided by her intercession.' The prayer for Christmas-time—*Deus qui salutis*—ends thus: 'that we may experience the intercession of the Blessed Mary, through whom we have received the Author of life.' At Easter and during the rest of the year, is said, *Concede nos*, by which we pray to God 'that we may arrive at eternal felicity through the glorious intercession of the Blessed Mary, ever virgin.' The same form of prayer is used likewise in the Greek Church. In the liturgies of St. Chrysostom and St. Basil, our Saviour is supplicated 'through the intercession of His ever-spotless, ever-Virgin Mother.' Accordingly, it must be stated that, in all prayers to the Blessed Virgin, her intercessory office is understood, though by chance it may not be expressed. The Catholic Church, therefore, in cherishing the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, does not in any way attribute to her the honours due to the Divinity, but only solicits her powerful intercession with God. She is styled by St. Epiphanius,

*omnipotentia supplex*—all-powerful by the power of supplication—and as such she is addressed by Christians, and as such she addresses herself to her Divine Son, and as such she obtains graces in favour of her clients and children.

2. *From the Early Fathers of the Church, as Witnesses of the Biblical and Traditional Doctrine.*

The evidence taken from the holy fathers in this chapter is twofold: it confirms, first, the doctrine of the intercessory office of the saints in general; and, in the second place, that of Mary in particular. With regard to the intercessory office of the saints in general, we have already observed that the holy fathers, with all the Catholic Church, teach that there is only one Mediator between God and man, Mediator by nature and redemption—the God-Man Jesus Christ, for whom nobody intercedes, and who intercedes for all, and from whose plenitude everyone has received and receives. However, according to the same fathers and the Catholic Church, besides Jesus Christ there are other subordinate and relative mediators of intercession and grace, whose merits and prayers draw all their value and efficacy from the merits of the absolute Mediator Jesus Christ. This doctrine is not only traditional but also biblical, and as such is witnessed by the holy fathers.

Origen (Homil. xvi. in Josue, t. ii. p. 437, edit. Maur.) says: ‘All the fathers who slept before us fight with us, and help us by their prayers.’ And in confutation of Celsus, he (lib. viii. n. 64, t. i. p. 789) says: ‘The saints help those who are desirous to serve Almighty God; they make Him propitious to them; they unite their prayers and supplicate with them.’ Finally (Homil. xxvi. in Num. ii. 6, t. ii. p. 375) he says: ‘Who is it that is doubtful that everyone of the holy fathers did not assist us through their prayers?’

Eusebius of Cæsarea (de Præp. Evan. lib. x i v ii. p. 663, edit. Viger.), speaking of the martyrs, says: ‘It is our practice to frequent their tombs, and there to pour out our prayers and supplications, and venerate their blessed souls; and we feel confident that we are doing what is right.’

St. Basil (Homil. xix. in xl. Martyres, t. ii. pp. 155, 156), speaking of the Forty Martyrs, says: 'He who is afflicted, let him have recourse to them in order to be released from his sufferings. He that is free from suffering, let him pray to them to maintain him as such, and in all happiness; and with the woman who prays for her children, or for her husband who is far away, or in a suffering state, let us unite our prayers to those of the martyrs. Oh you common guardians of mankind, benign sharers of sorrow, helpers of those who pray, and very powerful messengers.'

St. Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. xxiv. n. i. tom. i.) thus concludes his discourse in praise of St. Cyprian: 'Thou from Heaven look at us with benignity, and rule our supplication and our lives.'

St. Gregory of Nyssa (Orat. in Theod. Martyr, t. ii. p. 1017, edit. Paris, 1615), in his discourse in praise of St. Theodore, invokes the martyr that he would become the intercessor of his country before God, and says: 'If we have been till the present time saved, it was through you: but we also ask security for the future. If a greater intercession and patronage should be required, then call the choir of martyrs, thy brothers, and with them all pray. The prayers of the many just, the people, and multitudes, efface sins. Exhort Peter, instigate Paul, call John, that they may be solicitous for the Church founded by them, for which they bore the chains.'

St. Ephrem the Syrian (Encom. in xl. Martyres, Opp. Græc. t. iii. p. 251), ends the encomium of the holy martyrs by saying that 'they would pray for us miserable sinners, in order that Christ's grace may be infused into us, and by it, our hearts being illuminated, we may love Him.'

St. Ambrose (de Viduis, t. ii. col. 200, edit. Maur.) says: 'We must pray to the martyrs, to whose patronage we seem to have a right, having as it were in security their bodies, that they may intercede for the remission of our sins. Although they may have sinned, they had washed their sins away with their blood; nor must we refrain from asking them to assist us to overcome our infirmities, which they knew whilst in this world.'

St. Augustine (Serm. cccxvi. de Diversis), addressing himself to St. Paul and St. Stephen in heaven, says: 'You both from thence look at us, you both hear our sayings, you both pray for us.'

Having established the evidence of the early fathers with regard to the doctrine of the intercessory office of the saints in general, we proceed to their evidence in relation to the intercessory office of Mary in particular.

St. Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. xxiv. n. 11, t. i. p. 443, ed. Maur.) relates 'that the virgin St. Justina, afterwards a martyr, to fly from those diabolical snares with which Cyprian (before his conversion) intended to impugn her honesty, implored the assistance and patronage of the Virgin Mary, who would defend a virgin in such danger, and through the Blessed Virgin she was saved.'

St. Peter Chrysologus (Serm. cxl.) says of Mary: 'For the very hire of her home, and as the price of her womb, she asks and obtains peace for the earth, glory for the heavens, salvation for the lost, life for the dead, and heavenly parentage for the earthly—the union of God Himself with human flesh.'

St. James of Sarug (Op. cit. p. 188) thus addresses the Blessed Virgin: 'We supplicate thee, O immaculate pearl, that thou wilt intercede for us with that fruit which is born from thee.'

There could be nothing more easy for us than to add other testimonies of both Latin and Greek fathers, as well as to quote the authority of the synods, and bring forward the ancient liturgies of the Church, to evidence the doctrine and the belief of the Church with regard to the intercessory office of our Blessed Lady. However, as the reader will find them spread throughout the whole work, we abstain from quoting them here, being content by observing only that the grounds upon which *Mary's intercessory office of supplication* rests may be summed up as follows: Because such is the will of God in the present order of Providence; such is the engagement taken by Mary by accepting the office of our spiritual mother; this is required by the love she has for God, to propagate His glory, by bringing the creatures to their Creator; this is required by the love she has for her Divine Son, whose image

being the Christian's, she feels for them as for Him. To this she is brought by the remembrance of her suffering, in union with the pains and torments of her Son, for the salvation of fallen man; this is urged by her earnest desire for our eternal salvation as her beloved children. Then, turning to our Blessed Mother, let us say with the Catholic Church, 'We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever-Glorious and Blessed Virgin.'

### 3. *From Christian Archæology.*

We exhibit, in the first place, several epitaphs of the Christian hypogæes of Rome, belonging to the first centuries of the Christian era, in which the ardour of faith and piety of the early Christians is ascertained. By these, and by all additional monuments of the earliest antiquity, brought out in the present chapter, as well as in the rest of this work, the reader will be able to judge what credit should be given to those who maintain that in the Primitive Church there are no records of invocation of martyrs and other deceased saints.

From the Cemetery of Gordianus Epimachus is taken the following inscription, belonging to the third century, and referred to by Buonaruoti (*Vetri Cemeteriali*, p. 167) :—

#### 1

SABBATIUS, SWEET SOUL, ASK AND PRAY  
FOR THY BRETHREN AND COMPANIONS.

---

From the Cemetery of Callisto is the following, taken from Marangoni (*Appendix ad Act. Victorin. Mart.* p. 119) :—

#### 2

ATTICUS, THY SPIRIT IS IN THE BLESSING,  
PRAY FOR THY PARENTS.

---

From the Cemetery of Ceriaca is the following, quoted by Buonaruoti (*loc. cit.*) :—

#### 3

GIOVIANUS LIVES IN GOD AND PRAYS.

From the Cemetery of Priscilla is the following, from Marangoni (*Cose Gentilesche trasportate ad uso della Chiesa*, p. 456) :—

4

ANATOLIUS MADE THIS MONUMENT TO HIS  
DESERVING SON, WHO LIVED SEVEN YEARS.  
LET THY SPIRIT REPOSE WELL IN GOD, AND  
THOU PRAY FOR THY SISTER.

---

The following is published by Cav. Marini (*Atti de' Fratelli Arvali*, p. 362) :—

5

GENTIANUS FAITHFUL IN GRACE,  
WHO LIVED 21 YEARS, 8 MONTHS, AND 16 DAYS.  
PRAY FOR US, BECAUSE WE KNOW  
THAT THOU ART IN CHRIST.

---

The following Greek inscription, taken from the Cemetery of St. Agnes, and published by Marini, has been cited by Mozzoni (*Tavole della Storia della Chiesa*, sec. iii.), as belonging to the third century :—

6

THE INNOCENT CHILD DIONISIUS HERE LIES IN  
COMPANY OF THE SAINTS. ALAS ! REMEMBER US ALSO  
IN YOUR PRAYERS, THE CARVER AND THE WRITER.

---

The following has been illustrated by Father Lupi (*Diss. ad Severæ Martyris Epitaphium*, sec. 14), and belongs to the third century :—

7

O CALEMERUS, LET GOD REFRESH THY SPIRIT  
WITH THE SPIRIT OF THY SISTER ILARA.

---

The following has been published also by Father Lupi (*ibid.* sec. 17), and in this the divinity of Jesus Christ is professed :—

8

TO THE WELL DESERVING SISTER BONOSA IN  
THE PEACE OF CHRIST, ON THE 24 OCTOBER.  
CHRIST OMNIPOTENT GOD : THY SOUL  
BE REFRESHED IN CHRIST.

Cav. de Rossi (*Bulletino di Archeologia Cristiana*, Roma, Maggio, 1864, No. 5) speaks of a large inscription found in the Basilica of St. Lorenzo, in Agro Verano, at Rome, belonging to the fourth century, in which it is plainly said that the martyrs are the advocates before God. In this inscription, the husband of the deceased Quiriaca says :—

## 9

FOR WITNESSING HER LIFE, THE HOLY  
MARTYRS WILL BE THE ADVOCATES BEFORE  
GOD AND CHRIST.

We shall now proceed to show some plates representing the Blessed Virgin in the act of exercising her office of praying for her clients.

The first, fig. 75, exhibits the Blessed Virgin praying

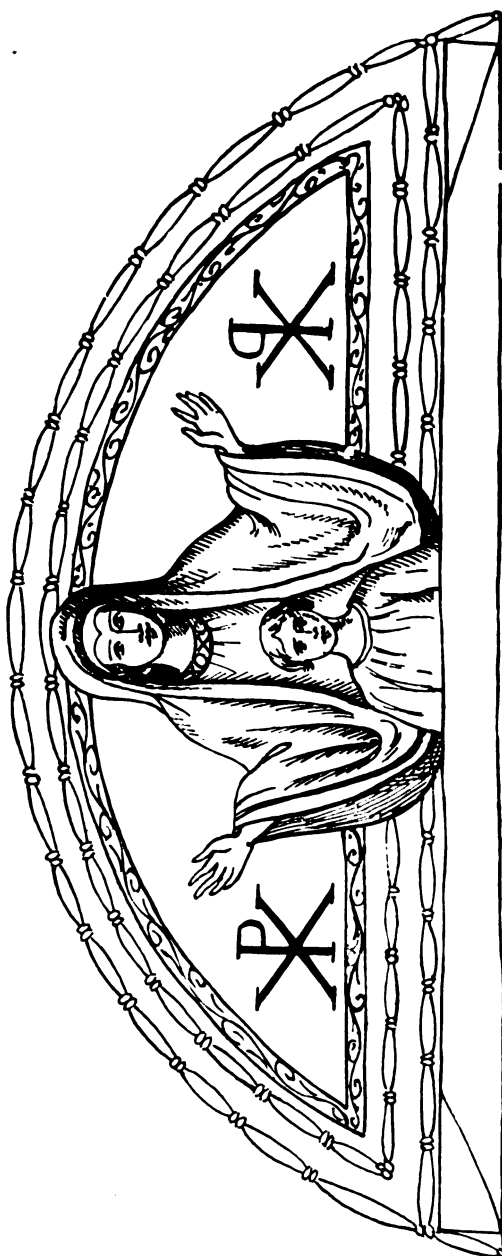
FIG. 75.



between two saints. It is taken from Agincourt (vol. vi. tav. 11, No. 2), who says: 'This fresco was discovered, in my presence, at the bottom of a chapel of the Catacombs of St. Lorenzo, outside the gates of Rome.'

By fig. 76 is exhibited a fresco of the Blessed Virgin, with her arms elevated, in the act of praying, and holding her Divine Son on her knees. That such a painting is really the image of Mary, there is not the slightest doubt. Indeed, Chev. de Rossi (in the work already named, p. 13) observes that, in general, there are never found in subterranean tombs

FIG. 78.





painted mothers carrying their children. Moreover, the monogram of Christ is there repeated, both on the right and left of the picture, the P being in both cases turned towards the group of the woman and child, in this way  $\text{X} \square \text{P}$ , which clearly shows that in the group must be seen Jesus Christ with his Divine Mother. It is also to be observed that the Mother alone is in the act of praying, and not her Son, while in other frescoes of the catacombs, the act of praying is

FIG. 77.



both common to the adults and the children. This fresco, according to Chev. de Rossi, belongs to the fourth century of the Christian era. The same fresco has been described also by Aringhi (in his work, tom. ii. lib. iv. cap. 37, p. 209).

By fig. 77 is shown a glass with the Blessed Virgin, likewise in the act of praying, having at both sides the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul. The painting belongs to the second century, and has been copied by Mozzoni (*Tavole della Storia della Chiesa*, sec. ii. p. 21), and also by Father Garrucci in his work '*I Vetri Cemeteriali*.'

Fig. 78 exhibits a mosaic, described by Agincourt (vol. vi. *Picture*, tav. 17) as follows: 'Christ in the act of blessing accompanied by two angels. In the lower part, the Virgin, at whose sides are the Apostles, and a little farther the martyrs or saints, confessors. This mosaic, executed at the time of Pope John IV., embellishes the arch and the bottom of the apsis of the oratory of St. Venantius in the Lateran.' It belongs to the eighth century.

In this last section upon Christian Archæology, the attention of the reader is called to the following statement of Chev. de Rossi, in the already-mentioned work (p. 7): 'The paintings of our subterranean necropolis exhibit the most

FIG. 78.



ancient images of the Blessed Virgin with her Divine Child. These are more numerous and ancient than any works hitherto published upon the Roman Catacombs may have stated.' To this remarkable observation of the said learned archæologist, we must add some other remarks of our own. While a student of theology in Rome some thirty-five years ago, we used to go into the catacombs with our Professor of Christian Antiquity at the Roman Seminary, and we remember, besides having it in our note-book, that we saw in several chapels therein, the Blessed Virgin with her Child painted on the wall behind the altars, and in the *arcosolia* belonging, according to our professor's judgment, to the second and third

centuries. Moreover, we saw likewise on the wall the Blessed Virgin between the Apostles Peter and Paul, who were holding her arms. We also saw images of Mary, under the symbol of the good shepherdess, repeated four times in various places of the necropolis. We also saw and took in our hand pieces of glass with the congealed blood of a martyr on them. And, as several of the paintings seen by us have not been published since, we therefore perfectly agree with Chev. de Rossi, that besides the pictures already published, there are *many more* not published, and that among them must be comprised also those witnessed by our own eyes.

## SECTION II.

### PROTESTANT EVIDENCE.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND on St. Michael's Day uses this collect: 'O everlasting God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order; mercifully grant, that as thy holy angels always do Thee service in Heaven, so by thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

Luther, two years before his perversion, wrote as follows: 'We cannot deny that God at the present day works miracles through His saints before their tombs and relics. There are miracles of such a nature that strike the eyes of all. I firmly believe with all Christianity, that we must honour and invoke the saints.'

Bishop Thorndike (Epilogue of the Tragedy of the Anglican Church) confesses 'that the luminaries in the Greek and Latin Churches—St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianzen, St. Gregory of Nissa, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, St. Leo the Great, St. Gregory the Great—and all since that time, have invoked and implored of the saints their assistance and prayers.'

Bishop Usher, 'On Prayer to Saints' (Catholic Safe-

guards, tom. ii. p. 204, London, 1851), admits the fact that in the Primitive Church prayers were offered up to God through the intercession of the martyrs. Here are his words: 'The memory of the martyrs was from the very beginning held in great veneration for their merits and martyrdom, and in those places where their bodies were deposited, prayers were usually offered up unto that God in whose cause they had laid down their lives.'

Bishop Montague, 'On the Invocation of Saints' (p. 103), says: 'Such is the opinion, the common voice, the general consent without the least doubt of venerable and learned antiquity, as far as I could gather from lectures and studies; and I do not see any cause for thinking otherwise with regard to the intercession. Indeed, I agree that there is nothing in this which could injure the mediation of Jesus Christ. There is no impiety in saying, as those of the Roman Church do, "Holy Mary, pray for me; St. Peter, pray for me." If I was allowed to reach them, and able to inform them of my state, I would not hesitate a moment to tell them, and this with all my heart, "St. Peter, St. Paul pray for me; do recommend me to our Lord Jesus Christ." If they should be with me, and near me, I would fly to them with open arms, and cast myself at their feet, to entreat them most ardently to pray for me.'

Bishop Newton, 'Dissertations upon the Prophecies' (Dissert. xxiii.), says: 'Read only some of the most celebrated fathers; read the Oration of Basil on the Martyrs of Namente, and the Forty Martyrs; read the orations of Ephrem the Syrian on the Death of St. Basil, and the Forty Martyrs, and on the Praises of the Saints and Martyrs; read the oration of St. Gregory Nazianzen on Athanasius, Basil and Cyprian; read the oration of Gregory of Nyssa on Ephrem the Syrian, the martyr Theodosius, and Meulius bishop of Antioch; read the sixty-six and other homilies of Chrysostom; read the three orations of the Martyrs of Egypt and other orations, and you will be greatly astonished on beholding how full they are all in superstition, and the power they attribute, as well as miracles, to the saints, and what prayers and praises are offered to them.' We are very thankful to Bishop New-

ton for his confession that the most celebrated fathers of the Church are all agreed in teaching the power of the saints, and for stating the fact of the offering of prayers and praises to them by the early Church. No less gratitude do we profess likewise to the other dignitaries of the Anglican Church for their unanimous confession of the same fact, that the intercessory office of Mary and other saints is attested and was professed in the *venerable and learned antiquity*.

Mrs. Jameson (in her work, p. xi.) says: 'Mary, on account of her connection with the great scheme of the Redemption, was above the angels; and first of all created beings, and having been raised bodily into immortality, and placed beside her Son in all the sacred splendour of beneficence, she came to be regarded as our intercessor before that Divine Son, who could refuse nothing to his Mother.'

In conclusion, we wish that our brethren outside the Catholic Church would notice the admonition of one of the most learned bishops of the Protestant Church, Dr. Pearson, directed to those of his persuasion. He, in the celebrated work 'On the Creed' (Art. iii.), says: 'If Elizabeth cried out with a loud voice, Blessed art thou among women, when Christ was but newly conceived in the womb, what expressions of honour and admiration can we think sufficient now that Christ is in heaven, and that Mother with Him?' And, filled with the sentiments of Bishop Montague, fly with open arms to the patronage of Mary and other saints: 'I would fly to them with open arms, and cast myself at their feet, to entreat them most ardently to pray for me.'

## CHAPTER XX.

## DIFFICULTIES AGAINST MARY'S DIGNITY ANSWERED PRINCIPALLY BY PROTESTANT WRITERS.

THIS axiom is admitted equally by Pagans, Catholics, and Protestants, viz. that in a disputation, the confession, or admission, of the adversary is the best argument against him. Cicero (*Orat. pro Quin.*) says: 'Thy evidence that in a matter of others may be of a little moment, the same, if it is against thee, becomes of a great importance.' St. Irenæus (*adv. Hær. lib. iv. c. 14*) says: 'The proof which is taken from the mouth of adversaries is the best one we may have.' Peter Martyr (*Comm. Pl. part ii. p. 327*) says: 'Doubtless among all testimonies, that testimony is of the greatest account which is testified by the enemies.' Now, in pursuance of this principle, admitted by all, we think we can give no better answer to the usual objections brought forward against the dignity and worship of the Blessed Virgin, than by making the most accredited Protestant writers answer the difficulties brought by their Protestant brethren, as we shall do, with regard to the greater part of the following questions:—

I. St. Matthew testifies that 'Joseph knew not Mary until she had brought forth her first-born Son.' From this our adversaries infer that afterwards he knew her.

Bishop Pearson (*The Creed, London, 1692, p. 174*) answers the objection in the following manner: 'The manner of the Scripture language produces no such inference. When God said to Jacob, "I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of," it follows not that when that was done, the God of Jacob left him. When the conclusion of Deuteronomy was written, it was said of Moses, "No man knows of his sepulchre unto this day:" it were a weak argu-

ment to infer from thence that the sepulchre of Moses has been known ever since. When Samuel had delivered a severe prediction unto Saul, "he came no more to see him until the day of his death." And yet it were a strange inference to draw, that he therefore gave him a visit after he was dead. Christ promised His presence to the Apostles "until the end of the world:" who ever made so unhappy a construction as to infer from thence that for ever after He would be absent from them? Dr. Pearson (p. 173) also says: 'We believe the Mother of our Lord to have been not only before and after His nativity, but also for ever, the most Immaculate and Blessed Virgin. . . . The peculiar eminency and unparalleled privilege of that Mother, the special honour and reverence due unto that Son, and ever paid by her, the regard of that Holy Ghost who came upon her, and the power of the Highest which overshadowed her, the singular goodness and piety of Joseph to whom she was espoused, have persuaded the Church of God in all ages to believe that she still continued in the same virginity, and therefore is to be acknowledged the ever-Virgin Mary.'

II. In the above text of St. Matthew, Christ is termed *the first-born Son of Mary*. Therefore she must have had a second son.

The answer is borrowed from the same Protestant writer, who (*loc. cit.*) says: 'We might as well conclude that where-soever there is one, there must be two; for in this particular the Scripture notion of priority excludes an antecedent, but infers not a consequent. "Sanctify unto me, saith God, all the first-born," which was a form and fixed law immediately obliging upon the birth; whereas, if the first-born had included a relation to a second, there could have been no present certainty, but a suspension of obedience; nor had the first-born been sanctified of itself, but the second birth had sanctified the first. And well might any sacrilegious Jew have kept back the price of redemption due unto the priest, nor could it have been required of him till a second offspring had appeared, and so no redemption at all had been required for an only son. Whereas all such pretences were unheard of in the law, because the original Hebrew word is not capable

of any such construction, and in the law itself it carrieth with it a clear interpretation, "sanctifying unto me all the first-born : whosoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast, it is mine." The aperition of the womb determineth the first-born, and the law of redemption excludes all such tergiversation. "These that are redeemed from a month old Thou shalt redeem." No staying to make up the relation, no expecting another birth to perfect the redemption. Being then said (Luke ii. 22), "They brought (our Saviour) to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord : as it is written in the law of the Lord, every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord," it is evident He was called the first-born of Mary, according to the notion of the law of Moses, and consequently that title inferreth no succession, nor proveth the mother to have any other offspring.' To this we add the authority of St. Jerome (de Perpet. Virginit. B. M., Oper. t. ii. p. 192, Migne), who says : 'A son is called first-born, not because after him have been other sons, but rather to express that no one else has been before him.'

III. In the Holy Scriptures we read expressly of the brethren of our Lord and sons of Mary. Indeed (John ii. 12) it is said : 'He went down to Capharnaum, He and His mother and His brethren.' Also (Matt. xii. 46) : 'While He talked unto the people, His mother and His brethren stood without, desiring to speak to Him.'

Dr. Pearson (*loc. cit.*) answers this objection thus : 'Although His mother and His brethren be named together, yet they are never called the sons of His Mother ; and the question is not whether Christ had any brethren, but whether His Mother brought forth any other children. . . . Nor need we assert that Joseph had any offspring, because the language of the Jews includes in the name of brethren not only the strict relation of fraternity, but also the larger of consanguinity ; and therefore it is sufficient satisfaction for the expression, that there were such persons allied unto the Blessed Virgin. "We be brethren," said Abraham unto Lot, when Abraham was the son of Sarah, Lot of Haran, and consequently not his brother, but his nephew, and is elsewhere



properly styled the son of his brother. Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan "the sons of Uzziel, the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary;" whereas those brethren were Nadab and Abihu, the sons, not of Uzziel, but of Aaron. "Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son;" whereas Rebekah was the sister of Rachel's father. It is sufficient, therefore, that the Evangelists, according to the constant language of the Jews, call the kindred of the Blessed Virgin the brethren and sisters of her only Son; which indeed is something the later, but the most generally approved answer.' St. Jerome (in Matt. xii. 49) says: 'Brethren of Jesus are not sons of Joseph, but cousins-german of our Saviour; and Mary's sons are the sons of the aunt of Jesus Christ, who is the mother of James the minor, and Joseph and Juda, who in another place of the Gospel are called brothers of our Saviour. Besides, from the whole Scripture it is clear that the cousins-german are called brothers.' The same is St. Austin's opinion, who (in Job, Tract. xxviii., et contra Faust. l. xxii. 35) says: 'The relations of Mary were called brothers of our Saviour, because it was the custom of the Scripture to call all relationship, as well as the near relatives, brothers.'

IV. As the Scripture calls James and Joseph brothers of Christ, so the same Scripture shows that they were also sons of Mary, the Mother of Christ; for the Jews express them particularly by their names: 'Is not his Mother called Mary? and His brethren James and Joseph, and Simon and Judas?' (Matt. iii. 55.) Therefore James and Joseph were undoubtedly the brothers of Christ, and the same were unquestionably the sons of Mary; for among the women at the cross, we find Mary Magdalene and Mary the Mother of James and Joseph (Matt. xxvii. 56). And that the said *Mary* could be no other than the Mother of our Lord, appears from the fact of her going early in the morning to the sepulchre, with Mary Magdalene and Salome; and it is not probable that anyone would have taken such care of the body of the Son as the Mother: she was present at the cross, and not very likely to be absent from the sepulchre. Therefore it

was the Mother of Christ who was the mother of James and Joseph, the brethren of Christ.

This is also answered by Dr. Pearson (p. 176), who says: 'The urging of this argument will produce a greater clearness in the solution of the question; for, if it appears that Mary the mother of James and Joseph was different and distinguished from Mary the Virgin, then will it also be apparent that the brethren of our Lord were the sons of another mother; for James and Joseph were so called. But we read in St. John (xix. 25), that "there stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother and His Mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." In the rest of the Evangelists we find, "Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph." And again, at the sepulchre, "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary;" wherefore *that other Mary*, by the conjunction of these testimonies, appeareth to be Mary the wife of Cleophas, and the mother of James and Joseph; and consequently James and Joseph, the brethren of our Lord, were not the sons of Mary His Mother, but of the *other Mary*, and therefore called His brethren according to the language of the Jews, because the *other Mary* was the sister of His Mother.'

V. Jesus Christ spoke of Mary with little respect; nay, with disrespect, when, hearing a woman crying, 'Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked,' our Saviour answered, 'Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.'

Bishop Bull, 'On the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin' (Catholic Safeguards, vol ii. p. 278, London, 1851), answers this difficulty in the following words: 'Wonderful and full of comfort are the words of our Saviour . . . "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it," which is not a rejection of the blessedness of His Mother, but only a correction of the woman's mistake, who so admired the blessedness of the Mother of such a Son, that she scarcely thought of any other blessedness. Our Saviour, therefore, tells her, that "blessed are they" also—yea, and chiefly those—"that hear the word of God and keep it."'

VI. Our Saviour, being told that His Mother and brethren

were outside and desired to speak with Him, said: 'Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And He stretched forth His hands towards His disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.' Now also by these words He seems to have shown that He did not care much for His Mother.

The answer is given by Bishop Bull (*loc. cit.*), who, after quoting the words of the text, says: 'When I think there is a mighty emphasis in those words of our Saviour, "My Father who is in heaven," as if He had said, You Jews think of me as a mere man, and understand not any other relation that I have besides that which is according to the flesh; but know ye that I am of a higher Original, even the Eternal Son of the Eternal God dwelling in heaven; and as such, I own no relation but what is spiritual, and every obedient disciple of mine is to me as a brother, or sister, or mother. Indeed, the Virgin herself was more blessed by conceiving Christ in her heart by faith, than by conceiving Him in her womb.' Therefore Jesus Christ by the quoted words did not offend the dignity of His Mother, but He only wanted to teach the Jews that He considered and loved as His mother and brethren all those who do the will of His Father.

VII. Jesus Christ treated Mary at the marriage feast of Cana with great disrespect, because, being asked by her to provide for the deficiency of wine, He answered her, 'Woman what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.'

We have already fully answered this objection in Chapter XV., when speaking of the above miracle; therefore we refer our readers to it. It will be enough to observe here, that the miracle immediately worked by Jesus Christ, according to the wishes of His Mother, shows clearly the meaning of His words.

VIII. According to Archbishop Usher (on Prayer to Saints, from an answer to a Jesuit challenge), we are forbidden to address the saints, because God only is to be worshipped, as St. Matthew (iv. 10) says, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.' Hence a Christian is forbidden to pray to anyone except God alone.

We observe, that the version of the above text, as found in the Vulgate, is this : 'The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.' And this was the answer given by Jesus Christ to the devil, who said to Him, 'All these will I give Thee, if, falling down, Thou wilt adore me.' (Ibid.) Therefore our Saviour, to rebuke the pride of the devil, told him that it was not right to adore the devil, nor anyone else, but God alone. Now we do not maintain that the Blessed Virgin and other saints are to be adored, adoration being due only to God ; but we do say that a distinction is to be made between worship and adoration, as we explained in the Introduction to this work. Adoration, rigorously speaking, is only due to God ; worship, in its general meaning, is extended also to the saints. Hence the Protestant translation of the above text seems not to be right, using the word *worship* instead of *adoration* ; and consequently Archbishop Usher, who followed it, wrongly taking the word *adoration* for *worship*, pretended to conclude that to pray to saints was a part of divine worship.'

IX. Bishop Hall, 'The Old Religion' (chap. xiv. The Newness of Romish Invocation of Saints), says : 'The first that brought her (Mary's) name into the public devotions of the Greek Church, is noted by Nicephorus "to be Peter Gnapheus, or Fullo, a presbyter of Bithynia, much about 470 years after Christ." . . . And as for the Latin Church, we hear no news of this invocation in the public litanies till Gregory's time, about 130 years after the former.' Therefore, according to Bishop Hall's observations, no public mention of Mary is found in the Greek Church before the fifth, and in the Latin not before the seventh century.

The many monuments of early Christian antiquity brought forward by us in the preceding chapters to establish the antiquity of the worship of Mary, are fully sufficient to prove how erroneous is the above statement of the prelate of the Established Church. Besides, a female Protestant authoress, Mrs. Jameson, will answer him. She, in her work (p. lxx.), says : 'In the catacombs of Cериaca there is a painted figure of a woman, with arms outspread, and sustained on each side by figures, evidently St. Peter and St.

Paul. On the sarcophagi the same figure frequently occurs, and there are other examples certainly not later than the third or fourth century. That these represent Mary the Mother of Christ I have not the least doubt.' The same authoress then passes to observe that the type of the ancient Italian images of the Virgin 'has been transmitted from the East.' Though we cannot agree in this opinion, nevertheless we infer from it that, according to the authoress' testimony, the veneration of the Blessed Virgin in the Greek Church was older than in the Latin. The same authoress (p. 20) adduces two instances of the worship of the Blessed Virgin much more ancient than the epoch named by Bishop Hall, one being of the third, and the other of the fourth century: the first relating to a sect of women with whom it was customary to offer cakes to the Virgin Mary; the other, respecting St. Justina, who called on the Virgin Mary to protect her against her seducer and sorcerer Cyprian. Moreover (p. 67) she says: 'With regard to the churches dedicated to the Virgin, the most ancient of which tradition speaks was a chapel beyond the Tiber in Rome, which is said to have been founded in 217, on the site where St. Maria in Trastevere now stands. . . . But the cathedral at Toledo and the cathedral at Chartres both claim the honour of having been dedicated to the Virgin while she was alive.' But after such a material contradiction by a Protestant authoress to Bishop Hall's statement with regard both to the Latin and the Greek Church, we think any other observation on our part to be quite unnecessary and useless.

X. Bishop Bull, in his work 'On the Invocation of the Blessed Virgin' (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 272, London, 1851), says: 'There is not one title to be found in any genuine writer of the first three hundred years after Christ (to go no further), that may give any the least countenance to the invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or of any other saint; but very many most express testimonies against it in all of them: and therefore we are most certain that the doctrine of the Church of Rome concerning the invocation of the Blessed Virgin, and the other saints, was none of the doctrines delivered by the holy apostles to the Church of

Christ. And for our part we are content and fully satisfied with the knowledge of Christ alone, which was preached in the rude earth of persecution and martyrs, that is, in the best and most glorious ages of the Church.'

Bishop Bull, in the quoted passage, asserts—first, that no record is found in the first three centuries of Christianity of the invocation of the Blessed Virgin; secondly, that there are many testimonies against it. With regard to the last assumption, he does not relate a single one of the *many* testimonies he supposes to exist against the invocation of the Blessed Virgin, and therefore we think they were extant only in his imagination, and as such there is no room for us to refute what does not exist. Hence we intend only to take into examination his first assumption, in order to show not so much the want of good faith, which we suppose this illustrious prelate of the Established Church had, but only the want of a little more knowledge of antiquity before uttering such a bold and injurious assertion.

In the first place, if it be true that the invocation of the Blessed Virgin began only after the third century of Christianity, it would follow that some trace or indication either of the time or of the occasion in which it began should be found. But in the whole of antiquity there is no such trace or indication of the introduction of Mary's invocation into the Church. This silence, according to the rule of criticism, means that the invocation of Mary has not been introduced after the time of the Apostles, but was always extant in the Church from their very time. Indeed, it is a canon admitted by all, that when a point of faith or discipline is found in antiquity as admitted by all in all ages, and no beginning of its introduction may be traced, such a thing ought to be admitted without hesitation as coming from the apostles. Bishop Bull, therefore, to be credited, should bring forward some genuine monument showing where and when the beginning of the devotion towards Mary arose. This want of proofs on his part would be sufficient to contradict his assertions.

However, to be liberal towards him, and towards all those who repeat his assertions, we are going to give evidence of

his mistake. And first, as the bishop says, 'For our part, we are content and fully satisfied with the knowledge of Christ alone, which was preached in the rude earth of persecutions and martyrs,' we would ask him respectfully, if he thinks that Jesus Christ might be satisfied with honouring Himself alone, or, perhaps, might like that His Mother also should be acknowledged as worthy of honour and veneration? We would also ask him if the knowledge of the Blessed Virgin was not preached in the rude earth of persecutions and martyrs, just as the knowledge of her Divine Son? That Jesus Christ is not jealous of the honour of His Mother; nay, that He wishes that it shall be given to her, we have this in the Gospel, as was observed and vindicated by us in Chapter XV. of this work. Mary, being at a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, asked her Divine Son to supply the want of wine. According to the order of Providence, the hour for working miracles had not yet come for Jesus Christ; nevertheless He, on consideration of the desire expressed by her, to show His reverence towards her, and how worthy she was to be honoured, did not hesitate to grant immediately her wish. This simple fact means that Jesus Christ, far from being jealous or dissatisfied in beholding His Mother honoured and venerated by Christians, is rather Himself the first promoter of her honour, and the first propagator of the veneration due to her. Therefore, it seems that our Blessed Saviour would be not much pleased with Bishop Bull's wishing to honour Him alone, to the exclusion of His Mother. Neither can Bishop Bull maintain that 'Jesus Christ alone was worshipped in the rude earth of persecutions and martyrs.' He says so, because he never put his foot, as we presume, into the Roman catacombs, nor looked at the large volumes in folio written by antiquaries upon the subject; as, if he had done so, he would have certainly spoken in quite a different way. Our reader may spare himself the trouble of going to Rome, if he has never been there, and may abstain even from visiting the British Museum for proof of the veneration towards the Blessed Virgin 'in the rude earth of persecutions and martyrs,' brought by antiquaries. He has only to unfold

the pages of the first part of this work, and he will find abundant proofs of the honour and veneration of the early Christians and martyrs towards the Mother of God. Moreover, he could read therein the hundred quotations of the early fathers, as well as the testimonies of the first general synods and the order of the ancient liturgies, and see what was the spirit and the practical devotion of the Primitive Church towards Mary. Indeed, how could the whole world have fallen into such a practice, unless an existing tradition enabled them to invoke and venerate the Holy Virgin? This will lead us to a conclusion totally opposite to that of Bishop Bull, viz.: 'We are most certain that the doctrine of the Church of Rome concerning the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and the other saints, is one of the doctrines delivered by the holy apostles to the Church of Christ.'

XI. Bishop Bull was not alone in being mistaken through want of learning. The same misfortune happened to Dr. Hickes. It is to be observed, that in his work, 'A Discourse of the due Praise and Honour of the Virgin Mary' (Catholic Safeguards, vol. ii. p. 317, London, 1851), Dr. Hickes, speaking of the oration of St. Gregory Nazianzen upon St. Cyprian (in which the saint relates how Justina supplicated the Virgin Mary for help, when she found herself assaulted by the magical artifices of Cyprian and the devil) wants to deny that at that time the Virgin Mary was invoked; and to this end he (Dr. Hickes) says: 'There is nothing of them in the life of St. Cyprian written by Pontius, his deacon, who saith not one word of his being a magician, or of Justina, or of his attempting her chastity by magical arts before his conversion, nor of burning his magical books after it. Gregory took them all alike upon trust, and they are all alike to be believed.' So Dr. Hickes gives the lie to the holy father, or at least causes him to be considered too credulous, so that his authority might be rejected. However, the fact is that the holy father was quite right in affirming the truth in question, and Dr. Hickes quite wrong in denying the authority of St. Gregory. Two Cyprians are to be admitted, both martyrs: the one Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage; the other, Cyprian, Priest of Antioch;



the first martyred in the year 238, the second in 304. Now, Pontius wrote the life of the former, who had nothing to do with Justina; and consequently Pontius could not speak of Justina in his life. St. Gregory Nazianzen alluded to the latter, who was a magician, and tried to seduce Justina; and therefore Justina supplicated the Virgin Mary for help against him. Dr. Hickes, then, we think, had better study a little more deeply ecclesiastical writers before making remarks calculated to impair the authority of St. Gregory, and to damage Catholic religion.

XII. We are going now to make some remarks upon several passages of the work of Mrs. Jameson. The edition of her work, quoted by us, is the third, of 1864.

First, she (p. xviii.) says: 'The worship of the Madonna did prevail for nearly a thousand years.' If, then, it has only been practised for the last thousand years, the consequence is that it began only in the eighth century of Christianity. But how is this assertion on her part consistent with what she said in the places of her work already quoted? Besides, we do not know how she may be reconciled with herself in the following passages. In page xx. she says: 'The first historical mention of a direct worship paid to the Virgin Mary, occurs in a passage in the work of Epiphanius, who died in 403. In enumerating the heresies which had sprung up in the early Church, he mentions a sect of women who had emigrated from Thrace into Arabia, among whom it was customary to offer cakes of meal and honey to the Virgin Mary as if she had been a divinity.' Hence, Mrs. Jameson acknowledges that in the early Church, even before the time of St. Epiphanius, the worship of the Madonna did exist. Likewise, in the same (page xx.), she says: 'The very first instance which occurs in written history of an invocation to Mary, was in the lifetime of St. Justina, as related by Gregory Nazianzen. Justina calls on the Virgin Mother to protect her against the seducer and sorcerer Cyprian, and did not call in vain.' This attempted seduction happened before Cyprian's conversion to Christianity in the third century, he having died a martyr in the year 304, at the time of Diocletian's persecutions. Therefore, the lady acquaints us that

in the third century Mary was already worshipped. And we feel grateful to Mrs. Jameson for her sincerity when she says that Justina *had not called in vain*. Also, we are glad to hear from the same lady that 'these passages do not prove that previously to the fourth century there had been no worship or invocation of the Virgin, but rather to the contrary.' Moreover, she observes (p. xxi.): 'St. Augustine says expressly that there existed, in his time, no authentic portrait of the Virgin; but it is inferred from this account that, authentic or not, such pictures did then exist, since there were already disputes regarding their authenticity.' This was about the year 390. How, then, in spite of the above records, can she say that it was only in the last ten centuries that the worship of the Virgin commenced?

Secondly, she (p. xxi.) says: 'To the fourth century we refer the most ancient representations of the Virgin in art.' But if this be the case, we think we must say that the most celebrated antiquaries, such as Bianchini, Ciampini, Boldetti, Buonarroti, Bosio, Aringhi, Bottari, Agincourt, are all impostors when they exhibit to us representations of the Virgin in art more ancient than the fourth century. We must also believe that all the paintings still extant in the catacombs belonging to the first four centuries are but forgeries. Moreover, she says (p. xxii.): 'It was just after the Council of Ephesus that history first makes mention of a supposed authentic portrait of the Blessed Mary.' But she forgets she has already said, that before the time of St. Augustine, 'authentic or not, such a painting did exist.' (St. Augustine died before the Council of Ephesus.) Nay, in the same page, the learned lady says: 'The Empress Eudisia, when travelling in the Holy Land, sent home a picture of the Virgin holding her Child, to her sister-in-law Pulcheria, who placed it in a church at Constantinople. It was at that time considered of the greatest antiquity, and supposed to have been painted from life. It is certain that a picture traditionally said to be the same which Eudisia sent to Pulcheria, did exist at Constantinople, and was so much venerated by the people as to be regarded as a sort of palladium, and was borne in a superb car, in the midst of the imperial guards,

when the emperor led his armies in person.' Now, if such a picture, in the fifth century, was regarded as of very high antiquity, and supposed to have been painted from life, it clearly shows that before the fourth century the Blessed Virgin was represented in the arts.

Thirdly, she says (p. xxi.) : 'The earliest figures extant are those on the Christian sarcophagi; but neither in the early sculpture, nor in the mosaics of St. Maria Maggiore, do we find any figure of the Virgin standing alone; she forms but a part of a group of the Nativity, or the Adoration of the Magi. There is no attempt at individuality or portraiture.' However, we beg to observe that the earliest figures of the Blessed Virgin extant are not only in the Christian sarcophagi, but also on the walls of the catacombs; and we add that both in the sarcophagi and on the arcosolia and other places in the Roman hypogæes, the figure of the Virgin is standing alone. Nay, in the very mosaic of St. Maria Maggiore, the Blessed Virgin is found standing alone, as appears from Chapter III. of this work. Nay, pictures of the Virgin standing alone, and painted before the fourth century, have already been adduced by us in the evidence from Christian archæology, in Chapters I., V., VI., VIII., IX., and X. Moreover, a sarcophagus having the Virgin standing alone, made before the fourth century, is cited in Chapter II., in which our Lady holds a book, as well as in Chapter VII., where the Annunciation is separately represented.

Fourthly, she says (p. xxi.) that it was 'the opinion of the learned in ecclesiastical antiquity that, previous to the First Council of Ephesus, it was the custom to represent the figures of the Virgin alone, without the Child, and that none of those original effigies are now remaining, but only supposed copies of a later date.' We are ignorant of whom, among learned antiquaries, the lady speaks; therefore we are unable to express any opinion of them. The only one we know as having been consulted by her, is mentioned in her work, and praised by her in the following words: 'His celebrity as an antiquarian is not merely Italian, but European, and whose impartiality can hardly be doubted' (p. lxx.). Therefore his opinion, in preference to all, must be heard, to

justify, if possible, the assertion of the good lady. The antiquary to whom she alludes is Chev. de Rossi, of Rome, already mentioned by us, who, in his work, '*Images de la Ste. Vierge choisies dans les Catacombes de Rome*,' at p. 21, says: 'There had formerly been learned men who thought that the Blessed Virgin began to be represented as having her Divine Child in her arms, after the condemnation of the Nestorian heresy in the Council of Ephesus, in the year 431. But now that the discoveries of Christian archæology have proved, as clear as the light of the sun, that the custom of placing in the groups the Mother and Infant was much anterior to the Council of Ephesus and the Nestorian heresy, the modern learned antiquaries say that in the first centuries the Virgin was represented historically through the adoration of the Magi; but that, after the Council of Ephesus, the groups of the Virgin with the Child in her arms have been released from the historical scene, and produced with the intention of honouring the Mother of the Incarnate Word. Now the frescoes of our plates, and the monuments described by me, show that in the most ancient works of Christian art, the Virgin holding her Divine Infant has been figured independently of the Magi, and of any other historical scene. Witness of this is the group of the Cemetery of Priscilla, which, without question, claims a particular character for high antiquity, as I have already explained; witness, also, are all the rest which are to be seen in the same cemetery, and have been published by Bosio; witness, lastly, is what I have said on the painting where the Virgin is represented with the prophet, at the Cemetery of Priscilla. To these is also to be added the sarcophagus in Villa Pamphili, already described by me, where the Virgin is in a chair with her Infant Jesus, without the Magi. Moreover, the composition in which the Virgin is placed with the Magi, proves that the Magi are accessory figures, and that the picture of Mary is the principal, exactly as they are in the mosaics of the apses, and in other paintings posterior to the Council of Ephesus. Indeed, in the latter, Mary keeps the centre of the painting, so that the personages placed laterally are quite secondary, in order to indicate better the honour and worship due to the

Virgin. The same is to be seen in the ampullas of Jerusalem preserved at Monza, where the Magi and the shepherds are placed in the same manner on both sides of the Virgin, who occupies the centre. Likewise, the same arrangement is observed in the two very ancient pictures which have been reproduced by us in the Plates III. and V., as well as in an arcosolium, belonging to the middle of the fourth century, in the Catacombs of Cериaca. In the very beautiful vase of the Kircher Museum (which is certainly not posterior to the epoch of Constantine, as the style of its ornaments shows), the Virgin is sitting between the Magi and the shepherds, like the ampullas above mentioned. Moreover, the very number of the Magi, who are sometimes reduced and sometimes increased, according to the exigency of the symmetry, proves clearly that the scene is not purely historical, and that they have treated the Magi as simple accessories. In fine, the same is shown by the Adoration of the Magi, after the Council of Ephesus, they being represented not only as an historical fact, but also as a mark of devotion towards the Mother of God, as the medals described above. Einhart, in his "Annals of the year 823," mentions a very old painting which adorned the apsis of the Church of Gravedona, near Como, and in which Mary is holding her Son, and near her the Magi. Therefore, if it is positive that after the Council of Ephesus the Epiphany was represented rather as an homage to the Virgin than as a point of evangelical history, they have no right to affirm that before the said Council the Christian artists had quite a different view when they multiplied this representation. On the contrary, the Christian monuments prove that from the early times the groups of the Virgin with her Son form the principal subject, and that the Magi are as secondary figures; and, moreover, that this group is not the remains of a composition where the Magi adore the Infant Jesus, but its creation is independent of any historical scene.' The reader, therefore, will consider how far the authority of Chev. de Rossi, considered by Mrs. Jameson as decisive, may support her statements: first that in the ancient monuments of the Christian faith—the sarcophagi, the rude paintings in the catacombs, and the mosaics executed before

the seventh century—the Virgin appears simply as a veiled figure, not in any respect characterised (p. 4). Secondly, that the worship of the Virgin came to us from the East in the Greek type (*ibid.*). Thirdly, that none of the original effigies are now extant, but only copies. Fourthly, that there are no authentic representations of the Virgin alone holding the Divine Child older than of the sixth century (p. *lxix.*). Fifthly, that the said group was not considered an object of veneration before the end of the fifth century (p. 58). Sixthly, that it was only after the time of Constantine, and the condemnation of Arius, that the reverence to the Virgin, and the introduction of pictures into places of worship, gained ground (*ibid.*). And, seventhly, that it was the Nestorian heresy which first gave to the group of the Mother and Child religious importance and significance (p. 59). All these assumptions we think have been fully answered by Chev. de Rossi, in the work quoted, as well as by us in several chapters of this work. We will only ask Mrs. Jameson how she can say (p. *xxiv.*) that ‘on the gold coin of John Zimisces (A.D. 975), we first find the Virgin and Child’? Perhaps she did not see any of the coins of the preceding centuries in the Christian Museum of the Vatican, having the Virgin and Child. Nor was she aware of the coin mentioned in this work, Chapter VIII., as belonging to the first centuries of Christianity. An ancient coin was also published by Mamachi (*Orig. Christ. t. i.*). Also a medallion in bronze representing the Virgin with the Infant and the Magi, and belonging to the fourth century, was purchased in Rome by M. Le Blant (*Bulletin Arch. de l’Athen. Franc.* 1856, p. 9). In conclusion, Mrs. Jameson must have followed the opinion of Du Cange, who ascribes the introduction of this sort of medals to J. Zimisces; but by modern critics his opinion has been rejected.

Fifthly, we much regret to have to confute the following assumption of Mrs. Jameson. She (p. 58) says: ‘The earliest figures of the Virgin and Child may be traced to Alexandria, and to Egyptian influences; and it is easily conceivable that the time-consecrated Egyptian myth of Isis and Horus may have suggested the original type, the outward form and the

arrangement of the maternal group; so that the classical Greek types of Orpheus and Apollo should have furnished the early symbols of the Redeemer as the Good Shepherd, a fact which does not rest upon supposition, but of which the proofs remain to us in the antique Christian sculptures and the paintings in the catacombs.' We must confess that such a preposterous hypothesis and audacious assertion would deserve great blame. But considering it to have been said by a lady in a poetical mood, without any malice on her part, but only to show her erudition or singularity of ideas, we remain nearly silent, being content with observing that the type of the Blessed Virgin, as found in the catacombs in the early times of Christianity, as well as in other monuments outside, were quite Greek-Roman, *originated in Rome*, and were altogether different from that alluded to by the lady. The inspection alone of the woodcuts given in the different chapters of our work, will show that before the fourth century an original Greek-Roman genius was alone prevalent in all paintings. Indeed, what a broad difference there is between our woodcuts and that of Isis nursing Horus, exhibited by Mrs. Jameson (p. 12) as the type of the group of the Blessed Virgin and her Divine Child! The representations of Isis and Horus are like skeletons, scarcely bearing human likeness, having features and outlines of such a strange nature, that the difference between our paintings of the Virgin and Infant and the Egyptian monsters of Isis and Horus is like that of day and night. Moreover, it is very amusing to hear from the learned lady the history of the coming of such monsters of Egyptian type among the Christians. Thus she expresses herself (p. xxii.): 'It is worth remarking, that Cyril, who was so influential in fixing the orthodox group, had passed the greater part of his life in Egypt, and must have been familiar with the Egyptian type of Isis nursing Horus;' which would imply, that before Cyril's time there were no paintings of the Blessed Virgin and Infant among the Christians. And in that supposition what will become of all the paintings exhibited by us as extant before that time? What shall we say of many more belonging to the

four first centuries of Christianity, found and exhibited by antiquaries? As also of the great number which, by the lapse of time, have either been defaced or lost?

Moreover, St. Cyril is not only charged with having introduced an Egyptian idol among the Christians, to be worshipped as Jesus and Mary, but he is also reported by the same lady (p. lix.) to have taught heresy. ‘Cyril of Alexandria,’ she says, ‘opposed Nestorius and his followers, and defended, with a zealous enthusiasm, the claims of the Virgin to all reverence and worship due to her; “for,” as he argued, “the two natures being one and indivisible from the moment of the miraculous conception, it followed that Mary did indeed bring forth God.”’ Now, if St. Cyril had thus expressed himself, he would not have been considered by the Catholic Church as a father of the Church, but a heretic—a Eutychian—condemned by the same Church; because Eutyches said precisely what Mrs. Jameson attributed to St. Cyril, viz. that in Jesus Christ there was only one nature; while the Catholic Church teaches that in Jesus Christ there are two natures and two operations, the divine and the human, and that both natures are subsistent but in one person, that is, the Divine Person, the Son of God. The error of Nestorius consisted in this, that he maintained that there were two persons in Jesus Christ, viz. the Son of God and the Son of Man; so that the Blessed Virgin, according to this error, was only the Mother of the Son of Man, and not the Mother of the Son of God. Therefore, to avoid the heresy of Eutyches, as well as that of Nestorius, a Christian must believe that in Jesus Christ there is only the Divine Person of the Son of God, having two natures, the divine and the human, with their respective operations; so that Jesus Christ was not a moment man without being God: consequently, the Blessed Virgin, having conceived and brought forth an Infant, who was true Man and true God, must be called true Mother of God. This was St. Cyril’s doctrine, and that of the whole Catholic Church in his time, and ever has been before and since.





THE SECOND AND PRACTICAL PART.

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MARY MADE BY THE HOLY TRINITY AN  
OBJECT OF IMITATION TO ALL  
CHRISTIANS.



## CHAPTER I.

## ON THE IMITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN GENERAL.

IN the First Part of this work, we hope to have shown that the Blessed Virgin Mary was made by the Holy Trinity an object worthy of veneration and confidence to all Christians, so that she was entitled to be called the 'Woman blessed by all generations.' In this Second Part, we proceed to show that the same Holy Virgin is made an object worthy of *imitation* to all Christendom. It would indeed be of little avail to a Christian to have conceived some idea of the perfections of Mary, and to have entertained feelings of respect, veneration, or even confidence in her, if he should not look to her as the pattern of a holy life. In this consists indeed true devotion towards our Blessed Lady. Most assuredly there is but one way to the Father, that is, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who speaking of Himself says (John xiv. 6): 'I am the way and the truth and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me.' And St. Paul, writing to the Romans (viii. 29), says: 'Whom he foreknew he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son.' And St. Augustine (Serm. cxxiii. Oper. t. v. p. 685, Migne), says: 'God Christ is the country to which we go: Man Christ is the way through which we go: we go to Him, through Him.' Hence the divine virtues of our Saviour must be the rule of life of every Christian who is anxious to secure salvation. However, Jesus Christ being God-Man, and therefore an all-perfect Being, and necessarily perfect in all virtues, a cold Christian could plead some excuse concerning the possibility and facility of the imitation. Thence it was fitting the Divine Providence to cause that the virtues of our Saviour should be faithfully imitated and perfectly professed by one of His creatures, that there might be

no excuse for the possibility and facility of the imitation. Now there is no doubt that the creature, who above all faithfully imitated Jesus Christ, as a perfect reflection of His virtues, is the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Mother. Hence St. Ambrose says: 'Such was Mary that her life only may be sufficient for the instruction of all.' On this account we present to the imitation of all Christians our Blessed Lady, full of virtues as the moon in its fulness of splendour, clothed with the light of the Sun, from which she derives all her beauty. Hence the same St. Ambrose (*De Virginit. lib. ii. c. ii., Oper. vol. iii. p. 209, Migne*) says: 'Let the virginity and life of the blessed Mary be drawn out before you, as if in a picture, from whom is reflected as in a mirror, the face of chastity and the image of virtue. From her you can gain a model of life; for in her as in a pattern the masterly rules of probity are so clearly expressed, as to show what you ought to correct, what to avoid, and what to hold to. In learning, the primary incentive is to be found in the nobleness of the teacher. Now, is there anything more noble than God's Mother? anything brighter than her whom Brightness selected? anything more chaste than her who without human contact gave birth to a Body? . . . When did she ever hurt her parents' feelings even by a look? when did she ever dispute with her neighbours, or despise the humble, or deride the weak, or avoid the poor?' Every one, indeed, may find in Mary appropriate matter of imitation, according to his own spiritual wants and state of life. If St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said (iv. 16): 'I beseech you, be you followers of me, as I am of Christ;' with how much more reason may our Blessed Lady say this of herself to the Christians, 'My children, be you followers of me, as I am of Christ'? If the same apostle (*Galat. iv. 19*) calls the Christians 'My little children, of whom I am in labour again until Christ be formed in you;' with much better reason the Blessed Virgin may say to Christians: 'I already brought forth to you my Divine Son; but I am still in labour until Christ be formed in you.' This will happily follow in a Christian who takes a generous resolution of walking in Mary's footsteps by a diligent imitation of her virtuous life.

## CHAPTER II.

## ON THE IMITATION OF THE FAITH OF MARY.

## SECTION I.

## ON THE FAITH OF MARY IN GENERAL.

WE hope the reader in the present chapter, as elsewhere, will kindly allow us to treat this subject in detail, since this appears to be necessary in order the better to establish some fundamental truths of religion, and to develope doctrines necessarily connected with it.

Faith, according to the apostle (Heb. xi. 1), 'Is the substance [or ground] of things to be hoped for; the argument of things that appear not.' Hence, in matters of faith we have certainty, but not evidence; we are certain that such a thing is true, because it is proposed to us by an infallible authority; but we cannot understand the reasons thereof, because its matter is beyond the cognizance of our senses and the reach of our reason. As there are many mysteries in the order of nature, which are believed by all, though inexplicable to all; so in the supernatural order there are mysteries which we have to believe, though superior to our natural reason. We say *superior* to the natural reason, not contrary to it, because there is no *contradiction* whatever between the light of reason and the light of faith. They are two lights given equally to us by the same infinitely wise God, Author both of nature and of grace; and for this purpose the adhesion of our will to the truths of faith is called by the same apostle (xii. 1) *rationabile obsequium* (reasonable service); since, while it is not contrary to reason, it is conformable with the nature of religion, which supposes myste-

ries, as no man by mere natural light may know the state of grace and glory. Moreover, the light of nature itself induces man to believe the mysteries of faith; for the foundation of our faith being God who speaks, natural light teaches that man ought to hear and believe the oracle of his Creator and Sovereign. Faith, moreover, is the foundation of the supernatural life. Hence man, desirous to be united to God as his principle, his beginning and his last end, must believe what God requires of him, as the means to obtain eternal life. Such is the teaching of the same apostle, who says to the Hebrews (chap. xi. 6): 'He that cometh to God must believe.'

As there is but one God, so there is only one true faith and religion of God. Faith has been always *one*. The three laws—the natural, the written and the evangelical—each present to us one and the same faith more or less developed. The same apostle writing to the Ephesians (chap. iv. 5), says: 'One God, one faith, one baptism.' As no one can please God but by the profession of the true faith, according to the same apostle (Heb. xi. 6), 'Without faith [true faith] it is impossible to please God:' so every man is both by natural and divine law obliged to seek the true faith, and embrace it when found. This is so certain, that anyone who by his fault does not keep the true faith is already condemned by God (John iii. 18): 'He that doth not believe is already judged.' A doubt about faith argues deficiency of faith. Likewise opinion is not faith. Faith is the receiving *as-certain* all that God has revealed upon the authority of his Church.

In the new dispensation, the one and true faith necessary for salvation is that which is taught by Jesus Christ, as the apostle (Gal. ii. 16) reminds us: 'Knowing that man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, we also believe in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by the faith of Christ.' Such a faith in Jesus Christ is found only in one Church, in that sole Church which was founded by Him upon Peter and his lawful successors. Indeed, He said to Peter (John i. 42): 'Upon this rock I will build my Church.' He says, *My Church*; therefore, His

Church is one. Hence, there cannot be several churches of Jesus Christ, nor portions of Christ's Church, having different faith and doctrines. Jesus Christ said, Upon this *rock*—upon Peter's *rock*—I will build my Church.' A religious establishment not built upon Peter's *rock*, cannot claim union with Christ's Church. Therefore, St. Peter's Church is the only one true Church of Jesus Christ, in which alone the true faith of Jesus Christ is taught, and salvation is surely found. St. Cyprian, after quoting the said words of Jesus Christ, says : 'From that source flows the ordination of bishops, and the form of the Church' (Ep. xxxiii. edit. Paris). And the same holy father (de Unit. Eccles.) adds : 'The primacy was given to Peter, that the Church of Christ might be shown to be one, and the chair one.' St. Basil (ad Cap. ii. Isai.) says : 'By the said words, Peter . . . had the Church built upon him.' St. Augustine (Ep. lxix.) likewise says : 'Upon that confession [Peter] had been called the rock on which the Church was to be built.' St. Jerome (Ep. ad Damas. Pap. contr. Jovin.) says : 'I speak with the successor of the fisherman, and the disciple of the cross. I, who follow none as my chief but Christ, am associated in communion with thy blessedness, that is, with the see of Peter. On that rock the Church is built. I know that he who shall eat the lamb outside that house is profane. He who gathers not with thee, scattereth.' Jesus Christ again said to Peter : 'I will give unto thee the *keys of the kingdom of heaven*.' The word *keys*, not only in the scriptural phrase, but in the general acceptance and use of the word, signifies the superiority, or supreme power, with which a person is invested. Tertullian (Eccles. Scrip. x.) says : 'The Lord has given the keys to Peter, and through him to the Church.' Uptatus of Milevis (lib. vii. contra Parmen. c. iii.) says : 'St. Peter alone has received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, in order to communicate them to the other pastors.' How, then, will a pastor out of the communion of Rome be able to open the *Kingdom of Heaven* to the souls subject to him, if he has no key from the successor of St. Peter? Could he without the key open heaven and introduce them into it? Moreover, Jesus Christ gave to St. Peter the care and government not only of



the faithful, but also of the bishops, that is, of the whole flock, under the metaphor of feeding the sheep as well as the lambs, the mothers and the children (Matt. xxiv. 45): 'Feed my lambs; feed my sheep.' Upon which words, St. Cyprian (de Unit. Eccl.) says: 'Upon this one man He built His Church, and gave him the charge of feeding His sheep; and though He gave to the apostles equal power to remit sin, yet to show the unity of the Church, He established the chair, and by His authority appointed the origin of the same unity to come from one man,' And again he says: 'Upon that one individual He builds His Church, and to him He commits His sheep to be fed.' St. Eucherius (in Vigil. St. Petri) says: 'First, He (Christ) entrusted him (Peter) with His lambs, next with His sheep, because He made him not a lay shepherd, but the shepherd of all shepherds. He ruleth both subjects and prelates; he is, therefore, a shepherd over all, for besides lambs and sheep, there is nothing else in the Church.' Now, if the whole flock, both lambs and sheep, pastors and people, has been committed by Jesus Christ to the care of the successor of St. Peter, and under his jurisdiction, how will a dissenting bishop or minister claim to be empowered to administer validly and legally his office, while he received no commission from him, and acted independently of him?

It is, moreover, to be observed, that the power granted by Jesus Christ to St. Peter was not personal, so that it should cease at his death; but was a power granted to his *office* and *dignity*, which had to last for ever, for the particular purpose of maintaining the *unity of doctrine* and *government*. Hence his prerogatives were to pass to all his successors in the chief apostleship of the Church. Such a power, from the death of St. Peter till the present time, has been always exercised by the Bishop of Rome, and has been always acknowledged and respected by all the Catholic world. Applications and appeals were always made to the Pope, as to the supreme head of the Church, for a final decision in matters either of faith or of morals, as well as of discipline. The Church of Corinth, in the first century, had recourse to Pope St. Clement for that purpose. In the second, Polycarpus

went to Rome to consult Pope St. Anicetus on the question of the celebration of Easter. In the third, the bishops of Egypt referred to Pope St. Dionysius I. the cause and the writings of the Bishop of Alexandria, accused of Sabilianism. St. Irenæus went to Rome, to hand to Pope Eleutherius the letter of the martyrs of Lyons. Tertullian, also, went to Rome, before writing his book ‘Prescription against Heretics.’ Origen, having fallen into errors, went to Pope St. Fabian to be corrected, as appears from the letter of St. Jerome (ad Pammachium). St. Cyril of Alexandria brought before Pope Celestinus the cause of Nestorius. Moreover, the laws made by the general councils of the Church had no force or obligation before being approved of and confirmed by the Roman pontiff. Nay, no general council of the Church was considered to be legitimate unless the authority of the Pope had intervened, as it was observed by Pope St. Julius, before the Orientals. The same was stated without any contradiction by the legates of the Holy See before the General Synod of Ephesus. The canons of several councils were annulled by the authority of the Pope; so those of Constantinople, of the year 381, had no force, because disapproved by the Holy See (St. Greg. Moral. lib. vii. ep. xxxiv. 2). The celebrated Canon XXVIII. of the Synod of Chalcedon had no value, because rejected by Pope St. Leo. The first eight general synods held in the Church had authority, because they were confirmed by the Roman pontiff. The Synod of Chalcedon, after the reading of the letter of St. Leo with regard to the unity of person and of the two natures in Christ, exclaimed, ‘Peter, through Leo, has spoken: this is the true faith.’ The Sixth General Council (Third of Constantinople) received the decree of Pope St. Agatho against the Monothelites *as an object of faith*. The Seventh General Council did the same with reference to the decree of Pope Adrianus on the cause of Symmachus. The heresy of Macedonius was condemned by Pope St. Damasus, and afterwards, at his request, was also condemned by the First Synod of Constantinople. The heresy of Nestorius, likewise, was first condemned by Pope Celestinus, and afterwards, through his legate St. Cyril, his decree was confirmed by the synod. The

Fifth General Council solicited Pope Vigilius to declare his sentence with regard to the doctrine of Iba, Theodorus, and Theodoretus, and the decision of the Pope was acknowledged by the same synod. It is also worthy of mention, that in the early Church, before the rise of general synods, the sole decisions of the Pope were likewise received by all the faithful, and complied with by them. The doctrinal decisions of the Popes have always been law in the Church. In conclusion, the supreme authority of the Roman pontiff has always been acknowledged and respected in the Church.

A new testimony to the Roman pontiff being the sole bishop in the Church who possesses the episcopate in its whole fulness and universality, is given in the authority he has always exercised over all the bishops and sees of the Church. Indeed, the episcopal jurisdiction, upon a vacant church, is given only by the Pope. The consecrating bishop or bishops confer upon the person who is consecrated the power of the episcopal order; but as they have no power of episcopal government over the church of him who is newly consecrated, so they cannot confer upon him jurisdiction, that is, the faculty of episcopal government or commission, which belongs only to that one who has the supreme episcopate over all the Church, the Bishop of Rome, who, according to the doctrine professed everywhere, is the *Bishop of the universal Church*. Hence the confessors returned to the bosom of the Catholic Church, after the schism of Novatian, expressly said: 'We are not ignorant that there is only one God, one Christ Lord, one Holy Ghost, and that one alone must be the bishop of the Catholic Church.' Indeed, the power of *order* is conferred on the bishop at his consecration, and upon the priest on his ordination, so that a bishop or a priest, if validly consecrated or ordained, is a true bishop or priest, and such he is for life, because the *order*, or character, is conferred immediately by God on that occasion, and it is indelible, and subject to no modification, nor restriction in itself, or in regard to place or people. However, with regard to the power of *jurisdiction*, or assignation of souls to govern, this is received by the new bishop at his consecration, immediately from God, in a general way, that

is, he receives from God a *general jurisdiction* over all the Church as a member of the whole episcopal body, so that he holds a right to govern and teach the whole Church, when he is united to the rest of the bishops, and forms one body with them under the authority of the sovereign pontiff, the natural head of the Church. But the *particular power of jurisdiction, or commission*, over his diocese, is not received by him immediately from God, but from the head of the Church, so that a distinct act from that of consecration is required to confer on him particular jurisdiction, or commission. The apostles had unconfined jurisdiction immediately from Jesus Christ; but this was personal and extraordinary, to meet the necessity of that time, and the first foundation of the Church; so that such power ended with them, and did not pass to the bishops, their successors. Hence, according to the constitution of the Church of Jesus Christ, no bishop can pretend to have the power of jurisdiction, or commission, over a flock, unless he receives it from the Bishop of Rome, the head of the Church. The same is understood with regard to priests; though they receive at their ordination the power to hear confessions and to absolve from sins, nevertheless they require the assignation of subjects either from the Pope, or from their lawful bishop, in order to be able to exercise legally and validly such a right. Moreover, it is the Pope alone who has ever exercised the power of erecting, according to the wants of the Church, new bishoprics, or of dividing those already existing; while no bishop has any jurisdiction out of his diocese, nor may he create new bishoprics, nor divide, dismember, or alter in any way his own see. It is also an historical fact that only the popes have deposed bishops, and caused others to be consecrated to replace those who have been set aside. So Pope St. Agapatus deposed the heretic Antimus, Patriarch of Constantinople, declared him anathema, and consecrated Mennas, whose doctrine was irreproachable, and raised him to the see of Constantinople. This doctrine is so true that all the fathers, both of the Western, and the Eastern Church before its schism, acknowledged St. Peter, and his successors in the Roman chair, to be the origin and spring of all jurisdiction

in the universal Church. St. Cyprian calls the Roman see, 'Root and mother of all other churches.' St. Gregory of Nyssa affirms that 'Jesus Christ gave to the bishops the keys of sovereign power through St. Peter.' St. Leo says that 'nothing of authority is possessed by any man without St. Peter's participation.' Hence St. Thomas of Aquin (adv. Gent. lib. iv. c. 76) says: 'No unity of the Church without unity of faith, but no unity of faith without a supreme head.'

Moreover, for the very reason that the Roman pontiff is the only source of jurisdiction in the universal Church, he is also the only one empowered to give jurisdiction to bishops and missionaries for establishing new missions abroad; and from history it is clear that all new missions were founded by the authority of the Pope. In the second century Pope St. Anicetus appointed St. Irenæus to Lyons. Pope St. Eleutherius, in the year 180, despatched to Britain Fugatius and Damianus, Roman priests, through whom King Lucius and the kingdom were converted. And again, Pope St. Gregory, in the year 596, to restore religion, sent thither St. Augustine and his fellow-monks. In the third century, after the persecution of Severus, the Roman pontiff sent several bishops to the principal towns of France: St. Saturnial to Toulouse, St. Martial to Limoges, St. Ostremion to Bruges, and St. Denis to Paris. By the same Roman pontiff were sent: St. Amandus to Alsatia (4th century); St. Cyril to Bohemia (5th century); St. Severius to Noricum (Bavaria and Austria), St. Palladius to the Spaniards, St. Patrick to Ireland and into the north of Scotland (7th century); St. Kilian to Franconia, St. Amandus to the Corinthians and Slavonians (8th century); Elwulf le Verden to Saxony, St. Wilibrand and St. Swidbert to Friesland, St. Boniface to Germany; St. Cyril, Methodius, and Adalbertus to Poland, Hungary, and Slavonia (9th century); St. Siffroy to the Swedes; Ancharius of Homburg to the same Swedes, to the Vandals, and to the Slavonians; Rombertus de Brema and Methodius to the Bulgarians, to the Chararas, to the Moravians, to the Bohemians, and the rest of the Slavonians; Eugenius III. (10th century) sent to Norway

the Cardinal Beakipon, who for the space of seven years laboured for the conversion of infidels, and by the authority of the Pope established several bishoprics. Pope Innocent III. (13th century) sent a great number of missionaries to Morea, where many conversions were made. In the same century, many religious of St. Dominic and St. Francis were sent by the Pope into different missions, and a great number of Albigenses were converted. St. Francis Xavier, and many other religious of the Society of Jesus, were sent to the Indies, to Paraguay, to China, and to other infidel parts; and many other missionaries, both secular and regular, were despatched to America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. The Catholic religion, therefore, was propagated in all the above places only by jurisdiction or commission given by the Roman pontiff; so that now, according to the Pontifical Almanac published in Rome in this year 1868, the number of patriarchates amounts to 12, that of archbishoprics to 139, and that of bishops to 714, besides 229 archbishoprics and bishoprics *in partibus infidelium*, which makes a total of 1,092. Among the patriarchs are 9 of Latin, and 3 of Oriental rite. The Latins are those of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Babylon, Cilicia, Venice, East Indies, and Lisbon. The Orientals are those of Antioch (having under his jurisdiction the Melchites, the Maronites, and the Syrians), of Babylon (having subject to him the Chaldeans), and of Cilicia (to whom the Armenians belong). Among the archbishops there are 132 of the Latin, and 7 of the Oriental rite. Of the bishops, 651 belong to the Latin, and 63 to the Oriental rite. Amongst the sees *in partibus infidelium*, 38 are archiepiscopal and 191 episcopal. In the said document are also mentioned 103 apostolic vicariates, 5 apostolic delegations, and 22 apostolic prefectures. Now all the above prelates have received their mission from the Pope, the natural head and sovereign moderator of the universal apostleship, and from whom all spiritual jurisdiction, even with regard to the absolution from sin, is directly or indirectly derived.

That unity in matters of faith and morals can only be found in the Roman Church, is a truth admitted even by the

Protestant Groot (Grotius, Discuss. p. 27), who says: 'No union in matters of faith and religion can be hoped for, except under the Pope.' Indeed, a beautiful specimen of this Catholic unity was witnessed in Rome on the occasion of the eighteenth centenary of St. Peter's martyrdom, June 29, 1867. Here are the words made use of on that occasion by a Protestant gentleman, in a letter written by him in Rome to a friend in England: 'It was a wonderful sight (in Rome) to find no country, no people, or tongue, I may almost say no dialect, unrepresented here. It certainly shows that there is a universality, a power in the Romish Church, which few of us believe to be still in existence. I believe that Church to be as powerful to-day as ever she was in the middle ages' (Weekly Register, p. 8, July 6, 1867). Indeed, in the universal Roman Church throughout the world is witnessed to-day what St. Jerome (Oper. tom. i. p. 489, Migne) said, speaking of the faithful of his time gathered throughout the world: *Vox quidem dissona, sed una religio*—'Their tongue is different, but their religion is quite the same.' The very same observation was made by the learned Protestant Ranke ('History of the Popes'), who says: 'The Church Catholic is still sending forth to the furthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustine, and still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila. The number of her children is greater than in any former age. Her acquisitions in the New World have more than compensated her for what she has lost in the Old. . . . The members of her communion are certainly not less than one hundred and fifty millions, and it will be difficult to show that all the other Christian sects united amount to a hundred and twenty millions. Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching to an end. She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world, and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all.' A fresh proof of the daily increase of the Catholic Church is that the present Pope erected 5 archbishoprics, 102 bishoprics, 17 vicariates, 1 delegation, and 7

prefectures, besides having raised 13 episcopal sees to the archiepiscopal rank.

Having seen that there is not, nor can be, any ecclesiastical jurisdiction unless derived from the Bishop of Rome as head of the whole Church, we pass to see also that there is not, nor can be, true faith of Jesus Christ different from the faith of the Church of Rome. Indeed St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans (i. 12), expresses his readiness to go to Rome, and says that, by this means, 'I may be comforted together in you by that which is common to us, both your faith and mine.' From this passage it appears that the faith of the Roman Church was the same preached by St. Paul and the other apostles throughout the world. From the same apostle appears also, that the Roman faith was the touchstone of the faith of Jesus Christ for the whole Catholic world; as, in his Epistle to the Romans (i. 8), he says: 'Your faith is spoken of in the whole world.' Now, we are going to show that the same faith of the primitive Roman Church has remained in its purity, through all succeeding centuries, in the Roman chair; and has been, ever since, the type and key of the Catholic faith; so that all other churches, and the faithful of the universe, had to conform themselves to it. The same St. Paul, after saying that his faith was the Roman faith, and that the Roman faith was spoken of in the whole world, in his Epistle to the Galatians shows the necessity of keeping the same faith, so that anyone who should dare to preach a different faith would be anathematised. These are his words (i. 6, 7, 8): 'I wonder that you so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another; only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.' St. Irenæus, contemporary with the immediate successors of the apostles (cont. Hæres. lib. iii. cap. iii.), speaks of the Roman Church thus: 'It is necessary that all the Church—that is, the faithful, wherever they are—should conform to the Church of Rome, on account of her superior chiefdom.' Now, according to the doctrine



of St. Irenæus, which was the doctrine of the Catholic Church in the second century of Christianity, it appears that all the faithful, *wherever* they might be, were at all times obliged to conform themselves to the Church of Rome, on account of its '*superior chiefdom.*' Indeed, that all the faithful of the time of St. Irenæus acknowledged such an obligation of conforming themselves to the doctrine of the Roman see, is clear by the fact that no one ever contradicted the above statement of St. Irenæus, although they would have done it if the saint had been found wrong in his statement; at least the heretics, his adversaries, would surely have contradicted him. From this it appears that the Catholic Church in the second century held and believed that the Roman see had the right to teach her doctrines to all the Catholic Church, and that the Catholic Church throughout the world was bound to conform her belief to that of the see of Rome. That in the third century the same doctrine and practice prevailed, we have proof in two letters of St. Cyprian—the one written to Bishop Antonianus, in which the holy father affirms, that to 'keep unity with the Roman chair is the same as to have communion with the Catholic Church.' The other, to Pope St. Cornelius, in which he attests 'to have done his best that the bishops of Africa should remain united with the lawful successors of St. Peter, and by this means partake in the unity and charity of the Catholic Church.' But why does St. Cyprian say that communication with the Roman see is the same as communication with the Catholic Church? Why does he say that to remain united with the chair of Rome is to participate in the unity and charity of the Catholic Church? It is indeed for the very reason stated by St. Irenæus, that is, *on account of her chiefdom.* And the same St. Cyprian (Ep. lv.) says: 'The reason why there are heresies and schisms in the Church, is because all eyes are not fixed on the priest of God—the pontiff—who judges in the place of Jesus Christ.' Therefore, to avoid heresy and schism, it is required to direct the eyes to the see of Rome, and behold what she teaches, and do what is taught by her. Of course the Roman chair is a part of the Catholic Church, but it is

a part with which all the rest of the mystic body of the Church must necessarily be united and connected as the Church Catholic; that is, the Church of all nations. St. Jerome, to convince Rufinus, says: 'He calls it his faith; but is it what the Roman Church professes? or that which is contained in the works of Origen? If he answers the Roman faith, then we are Catholics.' But why so? Because the Roman see alone, among all episcopal chairs, is the centre of unity, the residence of the bishop of bishops, and the ~~only~~ see that has the right to exact from all conformity of faith; so that St. Ambrose justly remarks, that of the Roman chair only may it be said, and of her must it be said, 'Where she is, there exists the Church.' Hence Pope Anastasius calls all Christian people 'my people,' and all Christian churches 'members of my body.' Indeed, *Roman faith* and *Catholic faith*, according to the unanimous doctrine of the Church till the seventh century, had the same signification and were synonymous; the appellation 'Catholic' being applied to the Church spread over the whole world, that is, to all churches that agree with the Roman: so much so, that a place in which the Roman faith is not professed is called *Protestant*, *heretic*, *schismatic*, or *infidel*. *Roman*, among the ancients, was the same as *Catholic*. Thus, Victor Uticensis (in Persecutione Vandalica) relates of a Catholic that, having been interrogated by the Arians about his faith, he answered, 'I am a Roman,' that is, a *Catholic*. Now, such a constant and universal persuasion, from what did it take its origin? Surely from the preaching of the apostles; as, according to the rule of St. Augustine, that which has obtained in the Church, prior to the sanction of any council or ecclesiastical statute, must be certainly accepted as of apostolic origin. Hence St. Gelasius, and with him seventy bishops, declared that 'The Roman Church has been appointed over all churches, not by any constitution of synod, but by the evangelical voice of the Lord.'

Now, from what we have just stated, it appears that union with, and dependence from, the Roman bishop as the natural head of all the Catholic Church, precisely constitutes

the essential of a church, that it may be called 'a branch of the true Apostolic Church of Christ.' This is the criterion by which to know if a church, which claims to be that of Jesus Christ, is really so; because, if it is not united with the mother Church of Rome, it can by no means be called a living branch of the Apostolic Church, or a portion of the Church of Christ, but a mere human institution. Indeed, a mission for spiritual purposes received from a lay magistrate, king, or people, is but an illusion, a fraud, an absurdity. The impositions of hands, made by bishops who themselves are in fact unconsecrated, is null and void. The jurisdiction given by those who have not first received it from the successor of Peter is of no effect. But, thanks be to God, the time of illusion is fast passing away; so that conscientious Protestant clergymen, being aware of their false position, and the necessity for acknowledging anew the authority of their legitimate mother, the Church of Rome, are looking for the reunion, though they seem not as yet to have found the true road to it. Yet they may perceive in Mary the Star which is to enlighten and guide them, if they will but look on her.

Besides, they ought to have a clear idea of what the Catholic Church is. The Catholic Church means the *union* of all baptized, who *profess the true faith under one visible universal head—the Bishop of Rome*. From the above definition of the Church of Christ, it appears that, to belong to it, two things are essential: first, to profess the true faith; and, secondly, to profess it under obedience to the Bishop of Rome. The ancient Church of England was Catholic, because she had the above requisites: she believed all the Roman doctrines, and was subject to the Bishop of Rome. But the present Church of England disbelieves many of the essential ancient Roman doctrines; and, besides this, she is no longer dependent upon the Pope. Hence she differs precisely in that which constitutes the true Church, that is, *union both of doctrine and of communion*. Since the so-called Reformation, she has become a mere human establishment, founded by Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, who proclaimed themselves to be the *head* of the *Church* of

*England.* The present Church of England, therefore, differing from the former Church both in the inward essential points of faith, and in the outward essential acts of communion, we are sorry to say that she is no more Catholic, no more apostolical, no more Roman. Therefore England and other Protestant countries ought to go back as far as to the time of St. Augustine and his companions, that were sent by St. Gregory the Great into England, and embrace anew the faith that was preached and embraced nine centuries before the Reformation. Audin (*The Life of Henry VIII.* p. 306) says: 'Not only contemporary historians, but the Protestants themselves admit the authenticity of the miracles performed by Austin and his monks in their progress through our old forests. There is not one among the most cruel enemies of everything stamped with the impress of Catholicity—not even Foxe the martyrologist—who does not admit these prodigies, visible signs attesting the sanctity of these confessors of Christ, the legitimacy of their mission, and consequently the truth of the religion they were labouring to establish.' From this passage of so learned an author, we see that the doctrine preached by St. Austin and his companions was the true doctrine of Jesus Christ, being attested by God with irrefutable miracles. Now any sincere and high-minded Protestant has only to compare the present doctrines of his Church with the doctrines taught by St. Augustine. If the doctrines of his Church are the same, then he may rest in peace; but if he finds that they differ, with regard to union, both of *doctrine* and *communion*, from the Church of Rome, then he cannot cry peace when there is no peace, and therefore ought to confess that his belief, and the belief of his Church, is not the belief of the ancient English Church, and so must he conclude that he is out of the true Church of Christ. But, after this rather long but not unnecessary digression, we shall revert to the principal subject of this chapter.

Now the faith of the Mother of God was the most perfect one, so that for it she was particularly praised by the Holy Ghost through Elizabeth, at the time of the visitation, by these words: 'Blessed art thou that hast believed.' Faith

being the root of all virtues, Mary, by firmly believing the things revealed to her, and humbly saying, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, may it be done to me according to thy word,' fitted herself to exercise the virtues of hope, charity, humility, magnanimity, and the rest. Besides, her faith was very fruitful to us. Indeed, Elizabeth, after saying to Mary, 'Blessed art thou that hast believed,' adds, 'because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord' (Luke i. 43). Hence the faith of Mary was the secondary cause of the accomplishment of the things spoken to her by God. Such things were the Incarnation of the Son of God, the salvation of mankind, her becoming mother, remaining virgin, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, and all the blessings of God and the dispositions of His providence, in consequence of the accomplishment of these mysteries. All these things, so sublime in themselves, and of so high an importance to fallen man, were the happy consequences of the faith of Mary, who believed that everything that was announced by Gabriel to her on the part of God would be verified. But to form an idea of the perfection of Mary's faith, the principal characteristics of her faith must be developed.

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## SECTION II.

### ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FAITH OF MARY IN PARTICULAR.

FIRST, Mary's faith was *lively*. It was lively as well on account of her quickness in believing, as of her speediness in acting accordingly. She believed without hesitation the things revealed to her, and held for certain that such things should be accomplished, on the ground that God could and would perform them. St. Ambrose (in Luc. lib. ii. Oper. tom. ii. p. 1558, Migne), speaking of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, says: 'She, by asking "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" does not appear to have any doubt about the nativity of the Saviour by a virgin;

she had already read it in Isaias vii. 14, "Behold a virgin shall conceive in her womb, and bring forth a child," and consequently she believed that it would be done. However, she did not read before how it should occur, because this was not revealed to the said prophet. . . . It was only now that for the first time is announced, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee;" and this, as soon as it is heard, is believed by Mary.' Such ought to be the faith of every Christian, a lively faith operating by charity, according to the teaching of the Apostle, 'In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working by charity.' A Christian, being persuaded that God can do everything, and will do what He has promised to do, can have no reason for hesitating; and therefore ought to believe as if he had seen with his own eyes, as well as perceived clearly through his understanding, what is revealed, and thus to operate and act according to faith, which is the life of the just. 'The just shall live in his faith' (Habac. ii. 4). Faith is not faith if the believers hesitate in doubt; for he who doubts is already an unbeliever. Nor can the Christian have any doubt respecting the truth of what is proposed to him to be believed, as the things to be believed by him are proposed by an authority that is infallible in teaching matters of faith and morality. Indeed, as it is impossible to put an end to differences relating to religion unless by a decision exempt from error, so to the end that the faithful might have an infallible teacher, our Saviour made Peter and his successors in the Roman chair the natural organs of the Church to pronounce an infallible judgment in matters of faith and morality. In doing so, the Bishop of Rome does not give expression to any private opinion, or follow any conjectures of his own, but takes for his rule the Faith originally delivered to the saints, the deposit of revelation, the traditions of the Church as gathered from Scripture, the fathers, the synods, the liturgies and other documents, and uses all human means for ascertaining the fact of revelation. And in order that he should not err in his judgments *ex cathedrá*, and claim an *official* infallibility, the Divine Spirit is with him as his guide; so that during

eighteen hundred years till now resound and operate in the Vatican those effective words of the Saviour, 'I prayed for thee that thy faith should not fail;' 'I am with you always, even to the consummation of the world;' 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church.'

Such an infallibility of teaching has been always acknowledged in the Catholic Church, as appears from the holy fathers, witnesses of the biblical and traditional doctrine. Tertullian (*L. de Præs. c. xxxii.*) puts this question: 'Was anything concealed from Peter, who was called the rock of the foundation of the Church?' St. Gregory Nazianzen says: 'St. Peter, called Stone, had entrusted to his faith the foundations of the Church;' that is, the bishops of the Church. As also has been observed by St. Athanasius, saying: 'Upon this rock—that is, upon thy foundation—the columns of the Church, the bishops, are confirmed.' Origen, upon the words, 'the gates of hell shall not prevail,' observes: 'By it was granted to Peter not only the privilege of the *person*, so that he as Peter should not lose his faith, but also that of the *dignity*, so much so, that neither he as a pontiff, nor any one of his successors, might teach an untruth in matters of faith and morality, otherwise the gates of hell would prevail against the pontiff as well as against the universal Church founded upon him.' St. Leo, upon the words of Christ to St. Peter, 'confirm thy brethren,' says: 'Jesus Christ wanted to teach us, that having provided for the faith of Peter in his capacity as head of the Church and sovereign pontiff, provided enough to keep in the faith the other bishops and all the faithful.' St. Jerome (*lib. iii. cont. Ruff. c. iv.*) says: 'Perfidy (that is, heresy) will never pollute the Romans praised by the apostle.' Hence Pope Agatho (in the letter to the fathers of the Sixth General Council) says: 'The Apostolic Church never strayed in the least from the path of the truth. The whole Catholic Church, all the œcumenical councils, have always embraced its doctrine as that of the Prince of the Apostles.' To this the fathers of the council replied: 'Yes, such is the true rule of faith; religion has always remained unchanged in the apostolic see.' And that this, from that age till the time of Bossuet, continued to

be the same, has been attested by him in his celebrated sermon 'On the Unity of the Church' (Works of Bossuet, tom. vii.), in which he expressly says that 'in the chair of St. Peter resides the fulness of apostolic power; that the same eternal chair knows not heresy; that the faith of Rome is always the faith of the Church; that the Roman Church is always pure; that all heretics have received from it either their first blow or their death-blow; and that the clearest work of the Lord which the Holy Ghost bestows on this mother of all churches, consists in her being rendered so just and moderate that she has never given room among her dogmas to any excess or exaggeration.' Also Fleury, 'On the Liberties of the Gallican Church,' observing that in the other apostolic sees had prevailed error, clearly says: 'The Roman Church has never erred . . . because God has said, I have prayed for thee.' Also the General Assembly of the Clergy of France declared that 'the Pope is the visible head of the universal Church . . . and when Jesus Christ founded His Church, He gave to him the keys of heaven with infallibility of faith, which is known to have remained immovable in his successors until our days.' Indeed it is a great fact, and a very consoling one, that no pope from St. Peter to the present sovereign pontiff has ever taught an error in point of faith or morals; so much so, that all the two hundred and fifty-six popes who have succeeded St. Peter have always taught the truth, without the least error, and all spoke as it were with one mouth. Now a proof of a fact lasting for nineteen centuries in confirmation of the promise made by Jesus Christ to His vicar on earth, shall it not be considered a sufficient guarantee that she shall never teach an error? Much more so, because during such a long period she has not been left undisturbed, and without temptation; nay, from the time of the apostles till the present, she has been continually vexed and tormented by the malice of so many heretics; and nevertheless, though *hell's gates* may be said to have assaulted her, still they have not prevailed in the least against her (Matt. xvi. 18).

Another most evident proof of the unity of the Catholic Church in pure faith and cordial charity, as well as a new



declaration of her infallibility, was given in the general assembly of bishops and priests at the Vatican on the occasion of the eighteenth centenary of St. Peter's death (June 1867). The number of bishops was 490, and in their address to the Pope signed by them, it was said: 'We have before our eyes the effect of divine power, by which the chair of Peter—the organ of truth, the centre of unity, the foundation and bulwark of the liberty of the Church during eighteen centuries in the midst of so many adversities and continual aggressions of its enemies—remains firm and immovable . . . It is most dear and holy to us to believe and teach whatever you believe and teach, as also to reject the same errors you reject, and under your direction to go on unanimously in the ways of God, and to follow you, and to help you, to labour with you, and to combat with you for God. . . . We firmly believe and keep profoundly in our mind what the fathers of the Council of Florence in the decree of union unanimously defined, that is, that the Roman pontifex is the Vicar of Christ, the head of the whole Church, the father and doctor of all Christians, and that to the same has been conferred by Jesus Christ full power of feeding, ruling, and governing the universal Church' (Correspondance de Rome, No. 464, Juillet 6, 1867). The following confession is found in one of the thoroughly Protestant newspapers (the Times, London, July 3, 1867): 'The address presented by 490 bishops to the Pope, in reply to his allocution, attests their entire obedience to his Holiness, and declares that they believe and teach what he believes and teaches.' Moreover, in the address presented to the Pope, and signed by 2,000 foreign priests present in Rome on the same occasion, it was said that Pius IX. 'was the best and most provident father of Christians, the teacher of Catholic faith and truth, and incapable of erring' (Correspondance de Rome, No. 466, Juillet 20, 1867). It is indeed a great happiness for a Christian heart to see 490 bishops and 2,000 priests coming from all parts of the world to declare before the tomb of St. Peter, the first pope, that his successors in the Roman see are the organ of the truth, the doctors of all Christians, empowered to feed, rule, and govern the universal Church, and who have never failed, nor

will ever fail, on points of faith. Nor is this the profession of faith of the clergy only, but of the Catholic laity also scattered throughout the world, as was testified by the same bishops in the said address, by saying: 'All Catholic souls feel great veneration towards your Holiness as their supreme pastor; they receive with great pleasure the oracles of the apostolic see, and glory in their adherence to the same with the most firm adhesion and submission' (Correspondance de Rome, No. 464, Juillet 6, 1867). With reference to the Catholic laity of England, their religious feelings appear in the address sent on the same occasion to the Pope, in which the following words are found: 'To you, therefore, as teacher of all the faithful, we conform with all our hearts, minds, and wills with filial submission, and glad fidelity, knowing that whatsoever you condemn is error.' The 'Westminster Gazette' (July 1867), referring to the above address, says: 'Never before, since the date of the so-called Reformation, has there been so complete, so thorough, so large and influential a representation of the Catholic laity of England as that which was convoked a few weeks ago at the invitation of Lord Petre, Lord Herries, and the Hon. C. Langdale.' Now from this admirable union of Catholic Christendom in asserting both the doctrine and the fact of the Roman pontiff's infallibility, it appears that there is no occasion to fear that the Roman Church may teach an error against faith or morals, and so lead others into errors. A Christian, therefore, impressed with the certainty that the doctrines to be believed by him are really revealed by God, because proposed as such to him by an infallible authority, cannot but conceive a *lively* faith, believe all revealed doctrines, and act conformably without hesitation.

In the second place, the faith of Mary was *simple*. Simplicity of faith means to believe in the Word of God as it were blindly, that is, not wishing to find out human reasons for believing. Divine doctrine from the mouth of Jesus Christ, participated to the faithful through the Catholic Church, is the basis and foundation of Christianity. A true believer says: God has spoken, the Church keeps His word, she tells what God has said, and what I have to believe; and

this is enough for me. I believe whatever she teaches me. A childlike faith is required of us. Mary had a most simple faith. The angel proposes to her two things in appearance contradictory,—to become a mother and remain a virgin. Nevertheless, on consideration that there is nothing impossible with God, she believes simply in the word of the angel, by saying: ‘Be it done unto me according to thy word.’ If she asks how it was to happen, this was only, as has been already observed, on account of the vow of virginity she had made. A like simplicity is required in every Christian in matters of faith. He ought not to require human reasons and explanations, but only the will and power of God, as we are advised by the apostle (1 Cor. ii. 5): ‘That your faith might not stand on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.’ The dictates of *private judgment* of individuals, therefore, must be decidedly excluded in matters of faith, as by this way we do not believe in God who reveals a truth, but we believe only in ourselves, in our own judgment, and act not according to the divine will, but according to our own persuasion, and make our faith dependent on the selfish tribunal of our human reason. Besides, if the *private judgment* of every individual Christian, exercised by each one for himself on the Word of God, and not the authority of the Church, duly warranted to expound it, had to decide points of faith and religious matters, it would open the door to all absurdities, contradictions and vices. For though we entertain a high opinion of the dignity and importance of human reason, it is evident that human reason has been the basis of error and incredulity; and has been employed to deny all truths, and to defend all falsehoods; that it produces among men the most conflicting and contradictory opinions; that by it what one individual deems true, another finds false; nay, the same person, taking his reason for his guide, is found in the space of a few years, months, or days to differ from himself, adopting and rejecting, believing and disbelieving, the very same opinion. The cause of it is because mere opinion is a very feeble fluctuating thing, the dupe of passion, of prejudice, of interests, dependent upon a thousand contingencies, accidents and circumstances, upon

climate, affections, love, hatred, education and so on. Private judgment, it must be confessed, has been introduced into Protestantism to discredit Catholic doctrine, to bring religious truth into contempt, and introduce disbelief. Indeed, no sooner had the Reformers proclaimed what they called the *glorious charter of Christian liberty*, than straightway every form of error sprang up under its captivating influence, and multitudes, including many Reformers themselves, became infected with the poison of infidelity, insomuch that Melancthon, contemplating the awful scene, and considering the bearings of the licentious principle, exclaimed emphatically, 'Great God! what a tragedy have we not been preparing for posterity' (Ep. xiv. l. iv.). And in the same letter he adds that no barriers would ever arrest the torrent of its devastations. Voltaire (*Lettre à Madame du Deffand*) says that it was from Protestant England that he and his fellow (infidel) philosophers had borrowed their chief doctrines. 'We owe it,' he says, 'to the English, who have taught us to reason so boldly.' Madame de Staël makes nearly the same observation, saying: 'The abstract theory of impiety was born in England.' The same lady remarks: 'Locke's principles have been the chief cause of our modern infidelity.' Thus Germany and Holland became crowded with hosts of free-thinkers. Baron Starke, Müller, and other writers, inform us that there is not so much as one single Christian dogma that is not publicly and systematically denied by the pastors of the Protestant churches. In Geneva, it is forbidden to speak in the pulpit, or in the schools, of the divinity of Jesus Christ, or of the Trinity and original sin. Nowadays there remains little more than a mere remnant of the original tenets of the first apostles of the Reformation; so that a man of wit said: 'If Luther should appear again, he would send to the devil all Lutherans; if Calvin should come, he would no more discover his children; and if Henry VIII. should revive, he would cut off the heads of all those of his Church for not observing his Articles.' A convert minister of the Church of England (Crawley) writes: 'You know how difficult a thing it is to find even two of her ministers (the Church of England) who agree together on matters of doctrine of

the deepest importance. If you go to one, he tells you one thing; if you go to another, he tells you quite the contrary. The Archbishop of Canterbury has one doctrine, the Bishop of Exeter another, and the Bishop of Ripon another, and so with all the rest. And as with them, so again with the clergy. Everyone teaches what he pleases. Where is the pillar and ground of the truth here? There is no such thing for you.' Let us cast our eyes upon the general state of Protestant churches, regulated, as they profess to be, by the pure dictates and suggestions of the so-called enlightened reason: what a scene of confusion, anarchy and disbelief! Such are the effects which the alleged rights of reason and private judgment have produced. How then can it be imagined that such a means has been instituted by the Divine Wisdom to be the foundation of the Christian faith?

Nor can the other Protestant principle of ascertaining the truth by the *sentiments, feelings, or convictions* of a mind satisfied with the supposed certainty of its own belief, be said to be more conformable with the Divine Wisdom. Indeed, what in reality are the sentiments, or feelings, or convictions? They are all follies, dreams, visions of the human mind, illusions extravagances, errors. For it is a fact which no one will controvert, that there is not a form of falsehood and fanaticism, which has not been sanctioned under the plea and pretext of conviction formed by sentiment and feeling. The Calvinist feels not, while the Lutheran does feel, consubstantiation in the sacrament of the Eucharist; so that the former denies, whilst the latter defends it. The Socinian does not hold the Divinity of Jesus Christ, as the Unitarian does not hold the existence of the Trinity; since each of them disbelieves these mysteries. The feelings of truth or falsehood, of right or wrong, vary everywhere with the varieties of the human character, and are dependent upon a thousand adventitious circumstances—as upon education, habits, constitution, times, seasons and fashions. So the religion of Protestants varies and assumes as many forms and features as there are fancies and feelings in the human mind. Now, amidst such a wild fecundity of errors, in such professions of contradictory creeds and numberless doctrines,

how can that striking characteristic of the true religion, which St. Paul declares so essential to it, 'the unity of faith,' be discovered? Therefore the sentiments or feelings are not the medium instituted by Divine Wisdom as the real criterion of what is true and right, as this Protestant principle leads either to Socinianism, rejecting the revealed mysteries of religion, or to a complete indifference in religious matters. In conclusion, according to this principle theological faith is excluded, and in its stead there is but an *opinion*, an *idea*, or *thought*, conformable with the feelings of a man's own wishes and partialities.

Besides the two already stated, there is a third principle of Protestantism, which its advocates consider as the surest criterion of true religion. This is the spirit of *inspiration*, which has been common amongst the various sects and members of the Reformation, and which animated the multitudes of its first adherents. To discover the absurdity of such a principle, it will suffice to observe that the suggestions of the Holy Ghost are always uniform and consistent, as such is the character of truth itself; whereas, among the men that have laid claim to the heavenly favour, we find that everything is replete with contradiction and incongruity. They have each of them their own sentiment and conviction, each asserting with confidence what the others with equal confidence deny, so that no two of them agree together. Thus Wesley and Whitfield, while each arrogated to himself the sacred gift of inspiration, yet delivered doctrines diametrically opposed to one another. Becker asserted that God had made him a present of Amsterdam and other towns, and sent his followers to go and take possession of them, when they presented themselves before the public in a state of absolute nakedness (Brandt's Hist. tom. i.). Herman, urged by the impulse of the same spirit, declared himself the Messiah, calling upon the people to murder all priests and magistrates. What a mass of frightful errors and impious principles has there not been taught and ferociously inculcated by the Anabaptists and other sectaries!

No less absurd is a fourth Protestant principle of the *fundamental articles of faith*. According to the opinion of cer-

tain Protestants, called Fundamentalists, it is sufficient for salvation to believe only the fundamental articles of Christianity. However, neither the authors nor the defenders have been able, as yet, to decide or agree amongst themselves what are these articles which constitute *precisely the foundation of Christianity*, so that thus the rule becomes nugatory and of no avail. Nay, the alleged rule is clearly repugnant to the leading rule of Protestantism, which admits no human authority in the determination of the articles of faith. Besides, according to the principle of the Fundamentalists, it is not *necessary* to maintain or hold all the doctrines of revelation for man's salvation. But how can they be assured that God has indeed revealed truths which are not necessary for salvation? Such an absurd gratuitous hypothesis certainly is more repugnant to the notions of the Divine Wisdom, and the order of revelation, than to maintain that there exists no revelation at all. For there is something less revolting in the idea of rejecting revelation because men believe that God is not the Author of it, than there is in the insolence of rejecting, as the defenders of Fundamentalism do, certain doctrines, which, at the same time, they admit to have been delivered to us by the Eternal Wisdom.

Lastly, let us examine the criterion of Protestantism ; that is, the *exclusive authority of the sacred Scripture*. This principle of the sufficient and exclusive authority of the Scripture, as the unerring guide in all matters of faith and religious instruction, was the leading star for the so-called Reformation. Bishop Hurd (Study on Proph.) says : ' Our incomparable Chillingworth, and some others, established for ever the old principle that the Bible, and that only interpreted by our best reason, is the religion of Protestants. Therefore all, without exception, must search for the truth through themselves, by reading the Holy Scripture. For as all, without exception, are called to the knowledge of the truth, and truth, it is contended, is nowhere to be found but in the Bible, so, of course, it must be the duty of all to seek and to find truth only in that sacred treasure.' Now, by such a principle, theological faith is quite excluded, and a Christian is put in the way of believing all sorts of errors as so

many truths. The history of the heresies of eighteen centuries confirms these remarks. Besides, are men competent to explain the mysterious volume? If the most learned themselves, left to their own talents, do not understand them, how could the unlearned succeed? On the other hand, according to this principle, everyone, even the most illiterate and simple, have a right to read and explain the Bible, and believe as truth what their understanding suggests to them to be true. This is the unity of Protestant faith! Moreover, the Bible does not contain the whole doctrine of Jesus Christ, as we learn by the apostle (Thess. ii. 15): 'Brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.' From this text it appears that besides the written doctrine of Jesus Christ, there is also His unwritten doctrine, received by word of mouth, still standing in the apostolical traditions preserved by the Church, which, being equally the *Word* of God, claims the *same authority* as Holy Scripture. Some of these doctrines, in progress of time, have been developed in form, as was observed by us in Chapter V. of the First Part of this work. Of this class are the number of the sacraments, the obligation to sanctify the Sabbath-day transferred to the Sunday, and the doctrine of the validity of baptism given by non-Catholics. Therefore by reading the Holy Scripture a Christian cannot learn all the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and he will be but an imperfect Christian, a deficient believer, if he does not receive also the doctrine preached traditionally by word of mouth. The apostles taught not only by Scripture, but also, and principally, by word of mouth, and both doctrines are evangelical, and to be equally believed for salvation. Hence the Council of Trent says: 'All books, both of the Old and New Testament, as well as the traditions, ought to be received, and venerated with the same sentiment of piety' (Sect. iv.). Besides, from Holy Scripture we cannot know the number of the books which are divinely inspired, what is the true version of the Bible, and whether certain versions are free from error. The four English versions of the Bible, which had existed before King James, were rejected by the same Protestants as corrupt, and even

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the version of King James is not very faithful to the original. This and other inconveniences in so important a matter as faith, proves how justly the Catholic Church holds that the Scripture alone interpreted by human reason cannot be a rule of faith, but, on the contrary, would be a source of deception and error, besides being insufficient.

It was for this reason that Jesus Christ, wishing that one and the same doctrine, without error, should be taught and learned by all, established a supreme and infallible authority to be the pillar and ground of truth for all (1 Tim. iii. 18), accessible to all, binding all, and which should teach all nations the true revealed doctrine necessary for salvation. Such a *teaching authority*, as has been proved above (chap. ii. sec. ii.), is the Roman Church, so that the teaching of the Roman Church ought to be the rule of Christian faith. Indeed, what better and easier means can there be than this for all Christians, whether learned or ignorant, to know with certainty the doctrine taught by Christ? To become acquainted with those doctrines, it is sufficient for a Catholic to go and hear his own parish priest, since he knows that in the Catholic Church every parish priest is appointed by his bishop, every bishop receives the power to exercise his jurisdiction from the Roman pontiff, and the Bishop of Rome is acknowledged as legitimate successor of St. Peter by all the Catholic episcopate. He knows, moreover, that the doctrine of his parish priest is the same as that of the bishop, and the doctrine of the bishop is the same as that of the Pope, because he is aware that if any parish priest, or bishop, should teach the least error in matters of faith, he would be immediately deprived of his office. Hence the poorest and most ignorant countryman, without any distrust or anxiety at seeing his parish priest in pacific possession of his parish, is sure he must be legitimately approved by his bishop, as his bishop likewise must be authorised by the Pope, and the Pope must be acknowledged legitimate successor of St. Peter by the Catholic episcopate. And he is confirmed in his faith by hearing the prayers offered in his parish both for the Pope and the bishop, as well as by the publishing in the same parish the pastorals of his bishop, as well as the bulls of the

Pope. Indeed, our Blessed Saviour did not say to private individuals, 'I will send the Holy Ghost in order to teach you the things of faith,' as such a promise He made only to His Church, saying (Matt. xviii. 20): 'Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.' We read, likewise, that our Saviour gave power to understand the Scriptures to His apostles only, in order that they might teach the faithful: 'Then He gave them power of mind to understand the Scriptures.' Thus, when the eunuch of Candaces the queen was reading the Scripture, and could not understand it, the Holy Ghost did not give him the understanding, but, as is related in the Acts (c. viii.), 'the Spirit said to Philip (the apostle), Go near and join thyself to this chariot; and Philip, running thither, heard him reading the prophet Isaias, and he said, Thinkest thou that thou understandest what thou readest? And he said, And how can I, unless some man show me? . . . And then Philip, opening his mouth and beginning at this scripture, preached unto him Jesus Christ. And they came to a certain water, and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me from being baptized? . . . And they went down into the water . . . and he baptized him.' The fact is too clear to need any comments. Indeed, Jesus Christ did not establish any other rule of faith except that one of *preaching the Gospel* by the apostles and their legitimate successors in the ministry, saying (Mark xvi. 15), 'Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature.' He did not say to them, Go and read and distribute the Bible; but *Go and preach*. Therefore the rule of faith established by Jesus Christ is the Word of God *authoritatively preached according to the teaching of the Church*.

This is so true and certain, that the same Saviour adds that all those who will believe in the *preaching* of His ministers shall be saved; as, on the contrary, all those who will not believe them shall be condemned (ib. 6): 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned.' And again (Luke x. 16) He says: 'He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me.' Hence the apostle (Rom. x. 17) says: 'Faith

cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ.' Therefore, the doctrine from the mouth of Christ, transmitted to Christians through the Catholic apostleship, is the rule of faith. There can be no mistake about it: the teaching of the Catholic Church alone is the rule of faith appointed by Jesus Christ for all. She is (1 Tim. iii. 15) 'the pillar and ground of truth.' (Mark xiv. 18): 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' And such a rule of faith was acknowledged by all antiquity, so that St. Augustine declares: 'I would not believe in the Gospel, if the authority of the Church did not first persuade me to do so.' Indeed, the authority of the Catholic Church is established on the successive mission of their pastors, which goes back as far as the apostles and Christ. The Catholic bishops only, because of their being true successors of the apostles, have a right to say, as the apostles did, 'We are the ambassadors of Christ, and the lawful dispensers of the divine mysteries;' and consequently a Catholic is sure to hear from them the word of God, and receive validly the sacraments. A Roman Catholic is never uncertain in his belief; for the Catholic Church, being sure of her position, teaches him *positively* what he has to believe. But those who are separated from her, not having an authority for infallible teaching, must of course be doubtful and inconstant in their belief. A recent instance of this is to be seen in Puseyism. Not wishing to admit the infallible teaching of the Roman Church, they pass from one error to another, from belief to disbelief; so that, by their late declaration on the subject of the Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist, signed by Dr. Pusey and other eminent clergymen of high Anglican views, they have shown their adhesion to the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation, and thus become Lutherans. It is indeed a great pity to see such men, of so high a standing, so moral in their conduct, and so worthy of respect, so far from reaching the truth, going more and more astray from it! One single act of humiliation would save them. Had not Mary bowed before Gabriel, subjecting herself entirely to him as the herald of God, she never would have become Mother of God. So those honest-minded devout souls, who

are proud to be called 'English Catholics,' will never reach the real blessing of that name, unless they take such a step as to be called 'Roman Catholics.' This will be done as soon as they, bowing themselves before the Angel and Vicar of God on this earth, with an entire and unconditional submission shall say, with the humility and sincerity of Mary, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it to me according to Thy word.'

The only means to emerge from the state of fluctuation and uncertainty, to acquire peace of mind and heart, and die happily, is the profession of the Catholic faith. We remember a correspondence between Voltaire and a young lady, who, being dangerously ill, wrote to him, asking his advice as to what she should do in case of death. Voltaire replied that it would be advisable for her to send for a Catholic priest. The lady, greatly astonished at such an answer, replied that this was not conformable with his former teaching. The philosopher, answering, said that this was true; but that the most sure way was to be preferred, when eternity was at stake. Voltaire himself three times, being dangerously ill, sent for the Catholic priest, and recanted his errors. Indeed, it is not rare that, at the point of death, those who are outside the Catholic Church ask the bystanders if they were right or wrong in what they had believed; while a sincere Roman Catholic, at the point of his death, has no doubt about his religion; nay, he feels happy on consideration of the evidence he had of the truth of his religion. A Jewish rabbi of Tuscany, some time ago (as we learned from trustworthy witnesses)—being converted to Christianity, became a Catholic parish priest—used to affirm that, when he was a rabbi, in assisting the dying Jews, he often heard them asking him (even those who had lived a virtuous life according to their religion): 'Was the religion I have professed the true one? Might it not be probable that I have been mistaken? Do you assure me of my salvation by dying in this religion?' On the contrary, with regard to the dying Catholics, the same converted rabbi affirmed that he never met with a single instance of one who, at the point of death, had expressed the least doubt of the truth of his

religion. He said that sometimes he found in them great despondency, and even despair, in consideration of their sins; but never found a Catholic asking him if his religion was the true one: such an instance he had never met with. Many of the infidel philosophers of the last century showed how little they were persuaded of the doctrines they so boldly held and taught during their life, which at the point of death they retracted; declaring that their infidelity was but the effect of vanity, a desire of temporal profit, the result of political principles, of human respect, of depravity of heart, and not of any persuasion or conviction. In our treatise on auricular confession (chap. iii. sec. viii.) we brought forward the testimonies of Voltaire, D'Alembert, Diderot, Count de Boulainvilliers, Benedict Maillet, La Mettrie, Boulanger, Montesquieu, Du Marsais, Maupertius, Fontenelle, Marquis d'Argens, Toussaint, Bougner, Count de Trissan, De Langle, Robinet, Larcher, De Prædes, Le Roy, Charnois, Raynal, Febronius, Giannone, Gioia, Lavoisier, and others of the same stamp, who wished to die professing the true faith. In reference to Protestants, we have also many instances of their return to the bosom of the Catholic Church at their death-bed, by disavowing what they seemed to have believed in their lifetime, or at least by showing how much they feared to die in Protestantism. Without going far, we have only to mention the founders of the Established Church—Henry VIII. and Elizabeth his daughter. Saunders (*Schisma Angliæ*) says: 'At the approach of Henry's death, he once more thought of a reconciliation with the Church. Gardner, on being consulted, advised him to assemble the Parliament, and communicate to its members his desire of a reconciliation . . . . After the bishop's departure, the courtiers, who were all trembling in anticipation of the loss of all their ecclesiastical spoils—the reward of their servility to the king, and of which they must have been deprived had the kingdom been reconciled to Rome—persuaded Henry not to allow himself to be alarmed by such vain scruples.' We borrow from a Protestant authoress, Miss Agnes Strickland, in her work, 'The Lives of the Queens of England,' printed in London, 1854, the circumstances of the demise both of Henry VIII.

and his daughter Queen Elizabeth. Speaking of Henry, she says that he died crying *monks*, and calling *Cromwell*; but the monks did not come, because they were either dead or exiled from the kingdom, and Cromwell arrived too late to help him. His last words were, *We have lost all*. With respect to Elizabeth, the same lady (p. 775 and following) relates authoritatively that Robert Carey wrote: 'I found her (Elizabeth) sitting low upon her cushion, and she spoke to me of her indisposition, and that her heart had been sad and heavy for ten or twenty days; and in her discourse she heaved no less than forty to fifty great sighs. I used the best words I could to calm and persuade her from this melancholy state, but I found it was too deeply rooted in her heart and hard to remove.' Other historians (quoted by the same authoress) add: 'All agree that before her illness she became serious, and discovered an unusual melancholy both in her countenance and manner. She was full of chagrin, and so weary of life, that, notwithstanding all the entreaties of her councillors and physicians to take the necessary means for her relief, she refused everything. The Queen had fallen into a state of sighing and melancholy. Though she (Elizabeth) with sighs and fear acknowledged herself weary of life, there was a fearful shrinking manifested when she found herself actually poised on the narrow threshold that divides time from eternity. She refused to admit her danger, or to do anything which bore the appearance of death-bed preparation. The Admiral came and knelt beside her where she sat amidst her cushions, sullen and unresigned; and, after much ado, he prevailed so far that she received a little broth from his hands. But, when he urged her to go to bed, she angrily refused; and then, in wild and wandering words, hinted at some phantasm that had troubled her midnight couch. "If he were in the habit of seeing such things in his bed," she said, "as she did in hers, he would not persuade her to go there." When Cecil and his colleagues were gone, the Queen, shaking her head piteously, said to her kinsman, "My lord, I am tied with a chain of iron round my neck." Cecil reminded her of her wonted courage, but she replied despondingly, "I am tied, I am tied, and the

case is altered with me." She was, however, not out of her mind, as Lady Southwell bears firm witness to her sanity. The French ambassador informs his king that the Queen continued to grow worse, not being able to speak more than once or twice in three hours, and at last remained silent for twenty-four hours, holding her finger almost continually in her mouth, with her eyes open and fixed on the ground, where she sat on cushions without rising or resting herself. At last she was put in bed. The council sent to her the Archbishop of Canterbury and other prelates, at the sight of whom she was much offended, petulantly noticing them, bidding them be packing, saying "she was not an atheist, but she knew full well they were but hedge-priests." However, Carey states that, about six o'clock in the evening, she made signs to have the Archbishop of Canterbury and her chaplains to come to her.' The same authoress adds: 'Many have been dazzled by the splendour of her (Elizabeth's) life; but few, even of her most ardent admirers, would wish that their last end should be like hers.' The profession of the Catholic faith is, therefore, the means to live and die happily.

In conclusion, that the Holy Scripture is not the rule of faith independently of the authority of the teaching Church, and that it is not necessary to read the Bible to be a true believer, is also clear from the fact that, during the law of nature—that is, from Adam downward for 2400 years—the Church of God exercised religion by tradition and revelation, without any written law. The same happened upon the establishment of the Christian Church, as there were at that time true believers and true Christians without the reading of the Bible. Two instances of it as related, one by St. Justin and the other by St. Irenæus, are here brought forward by us as specimens of it. St. Justin, philosopher and martyr of the second century (*Dial. cum Tryphon.*), speaks of the conversions to Christianity of barbarous peoples, and among them he mentions the Seites, a vagabond and ignorant nation, who were incapable of reading the Bible, and much less of understanding it. Yet the same holy father affirms that 'their faith, their fervour, and

the total change of their moral habits in consequence of the preaching of the apostles, had made them known to the whole world.' St. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons and a martyr, contemporary with St. Justin (*adv. Hæres. lib. iii.*), affirms likewise that many barbarous nations, without a knowledge either of reading or of writing, believed in Jesus Christ, adored the true God, Creator of heaven and earth, and preserved their faith with great fervour. These are his words: 'Those who received this faith without the reading of the Scripture are barbarous, according to our language; but, as far as regards their feelings, their practices, and their manner of conversing, they are extremely wise, walking in the presence of God in all justice, chastity, and wisdom; so much so, that, if anyone dared to preach to them any heretical doctrine, they closed up their eyes and ran away. They could never tolerate such blasphemies, and said that such a doctrine was not conformable with that which they had learned from those who had converted them to the faith.' Now, if the only rule of faith is the Bible, how could St. Justin and St. Irenæus praise so much the above people, who had no Bible? They professed, nevertheless, the true faith and sanctity, and were in the way of salvation without reading the Bible, but only keeping the doctrine they had received from the mouth of the apostles. Therefore, the authorised teaching of the Church is the only rule of Christian faith; so that, in the simplicity of his faith, by believing the doctrines of his Church, the Catholic is certain to know all the truths necessary for salvation. After all, it is to be observed that the Church of Rome, far from being an enemy to the Bible, considers its possession as the most valuable of its treasures; and, so far from being adverse to its circulation, she, on the contrary, wishes to see it dispersed throughout every corner and cottage of the Christian universe, provided only that its translation be correct, and that the interpretation be according to the holy fathers and the Catholic Church. From the apostolic brief of Pius VI., which gave its approval to the Italian version of the Bible translated by Monsignor Martini, we learn what the Holy See thinks on this subject.



The third noble characteristic of the faith of Mary was her *constancy* in the faith. Perseverance in faith implies that a Christian, in believing, must not be moved by all winds of doctrine, but ought to be firm, unhesitating, and constant in believing the revealed doctrine received by the Church. Mary had already, from her infancy, believed without any uncertainty in the coming of the Messiah, and was continually praying for His speedy appearance on earth. She also believed constantly in the authority of the Jewish Church as the true Church of God in her time, and showed a full submission to it. Moreover, the faith she had in the words of the angel, and her belief in the fulfilment of all mysteries of the new dispensation, was never deficient, despite all contrary appearances and human events. She sees her Divine Son born in a stable, trembling from the cold, deprived of all human comforts, even the most necessary things, and nevertheless she believes Him to be her Creator. She is obliged to bring Him away in the middle of the night in order to deliver Him from death, and bear Him away as far as Egypt; and yet she believes Him omnipotent. A faith less constant than that of Mary would have given way to the several reasons which seemed to dissuade her from such an inconvenient and dangerous journey. She beholds her Son thirty years in His private life attending to the wants of the house, and helping in the low trade of carpenter His putative father, and nevertheless she adored Him as her Lord. She sees Him despised, persecuted, scourged, wounded, and put to death, and nevertheless believes Him to be her God and Saviour, who will soon rise from death and save the world. Such ought to be the faith of a Christian. He must be a constant believer and observer of his religious duties, and overcome all difficulties which may interfere in the accomplishment of his obligations. In the way of salvation, there are many obstacles which cannot be overcome but by a constant combat. Hence the Holy Ghost admonishes everyone to be prepared for a spiritual war, and says (Eccles. ii. 1): ‘Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear,

and prepare thy soul for temptation.' Our eternal salvation shall be the reward of our perseverance.

Finally, the faith of Mary was *strong*, that is, superior to all difficulties. Indeed, there is no difficulty, no temporal danger, no pain, no torment of the body, which she would not readily have borne and endured to keep faithfully her engagements with God. Though her beloved Son is abandoned by almost all, and is derided and blasphemed by the bystanders, nevertheless she stands intrepid at the foot of His cross. She is not ashamed to be known by all as the mother of Him who was dying in company with two thieves. What an example for many Christians who, through human respect, are ashamed to appear followers of Jesus Christ! What a reproach for those who, through fear of losing the friendship or favours of others, give up following Christ! What culpability in those who show indifference in matters of faith! They have to remember the sentence of Jesus Christ, related by three evangelists (Matt. x., Mark viii., Luke xii.): 'Every one that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven.' True faith, therefore, by command of Jesus Christ, ought to be publicly professed. 'What I taught in secret (said the same Saviour to His disciples), you must preach on the roof. Do not fear those who might kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.' St. Ephrem (Rhythm xvi. p. 162, Morris) says: 'Faith, typified by the face, is set in an open place. He that concealeth his faith, it were fitting for him to cover his face also.' The Church of Jesus Christ by divine constitution is visible, and must be for ever visible, as a mountain to be looked at by all. Therefore every Catholic must be a visible member of the Church, outwardly professing his faith and showing it before all. If it is honourable for a man to wear a mark of honour received from his sovereign, what better and more useful mark of honour can there be than to belong to the service of the Sovereign of sovereigns, in His earthly court? However, it is necessary for him to have a

strong faith to overcome human respect, and other difficulties found in the way of salvation. With the grace of God and the practice of a strong faith, we happily may do everything, and shall possess the eternal crown, as the apostle (1 Tim. vi. 12) admonishes us: 'Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life.'

A converted sinner, of course, must be prepared to undergo even the most painful trials, and overcome the greatest difficulties to walk in the way of newness of life. He has to combat against his interior and exterior enemies; he has to change his sinful habits; he has to oppose old and deep-rooted propensities, to avoid all wilful occasions of sin, to destroy what sin has built, and erect a new building of virtue upon the ruins of self-love and worldly illusions. In order to be strong in faith, it will be well to look at Mary's faith, and implore her patronage with a filial confidence. A sincere will of not sinning again by the grace of God, and the intercession of Mary timely implored, will obtain from God the grace of constancy in the way of virtue. St. John the Evangelist (1 John v. 4) assures us of it: 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith.' Many trials likewise usually befall a convert from Protestantism. Loss of employment, loss of esteemed friendships, loss of fortune, loss of relations, and besides derisions and persecutions, are the consequences of his coming back to the true faith of his forefathers. He may, however, console himself on consideration that by it he participates in the trials of Mary. To him his guardian angel says: 'Blessed art thou that hast believed.' The embracing of the true faith has caused these temporal misfortunes, but by it thou becomest a true follower of Christ. Thou art happy, because by participating in Christ's trials, thou wilt participate in His glory. The eighteen millions and more of martyrs who gave up their lives in the midst of the most cruel torments rather than give up their faith, speak eloquently enough, and give courage to every one who finds himself in the same circumstances. To see the Blessed Virgin at the foot of the cross of her beloved Son, agonised by grief, and yet not fallen in courage, but standing with all intrepidity, and offering her own life in union

with the life of her beloved Son, such is the heroic example of a firm Christian faith.

A true believer, therefore, ought to keep the faith of Jesus Christ, as it is kept and taught in the Roman Catholic Church, and consequently his faith must be *lively*—that is to say, quick in believing and speedy in operating through charity; *simple*—that is, blind without consulting human reason; *constant*—to wit, in spite of all winds of opposite doctrine and temptations; *strong*—that is, superior to the greatest difficulties in the way, and professed *publicly* without any fear, as was the faith of Mary.

## CHAPTER III.

## ON THE IMITATION OF THE HOPE OF MARY.

FAITH alone is not sufficient for justification and salvation. It is a root ; but a root to be useful must fructify, must produce its trunk, its branches, its leaves, its fruits. If it is unfruitful it will avail nothing. Therefore faith must necessarily produce fruits of other virtues, by which the tree of Christian perfection grows up and is made ripe. Now, among the rest, theological hope holds a principal place. ‘Hope is a virtue infused by God into our soul, which raises our will to a firm expectation of eternal blessing, and the means necessary to obtain it, on the ground of the promises made by God, infinitely powerful, merciful, and faithful in keeping His word.’ The motives of our hope, as appears from the definition of this virtue just laid down, are, first, the *omnipotence* of God, by which we are persuaded that He can save us ; secondly, His *mercy*, by which we believe that He wishes to save us ; thirdly, His *fidelity* in keeping His promises, so that we are sure that, by doing good, through the grace and merits of Jesus Christ, we shall be saved. Such a hope ought to be firm and constant. According to St. Thomas, the primary object of hope is *life everlasting*, and the secondary are the *means* for the pursuit of the eternal felicity. What consolation for a good Christian to know for certain that this valley of tears is but a passage to the place of eternal happiness prepared for him in heaven, where he shall see and love God, and by knowing and loving Him, shall be happy for an everlasting eternity ! Upon this subject St. Thomas (2, 2, quæst. xv. art. 2) observes, that the object of our hope must be proportionate to the greatness of God, who is the Giver of it ; and He, being an Infinite Being, gives us an infinite good by com-

municating to us the everlasting treasures of His glory, so that eternal happiness in heaven is the proper object of our hope and desire. To this purpose we have to observe that the human heart has been created by God precisely to the end that it may be united everlastingly to Him as the sovereign good, to enjoy Him, and to be partaker of the same glory. Hence St. Augustine cried out to God: ‘Thou hadst made us for Thee, and our heart is uneasy till it repose in Thee.’ And he adds that the happiness which is felt in heaven is so great that, in order to enjoy it even for a day alone, we should not care to give up innumerable years of such delights and pleasures as are found in this earth; and he enlarges this truth by alleging the words of the Royal Psalmist, who, when speaking of God, says that he preferred to dwell for one day only in the presence of God—not indeed in the interior of His house, but only in the vestibule—than to live a thousand years far from God in the midst of worldly delights (Ps. lxxxiii. 11): ‘Better is one day in Thy courts above thousands.’ Man, indeed, being created by God, not for the happiness of this world, as He is only a passenger in it, but for an eternal happiness in the next, it follows that his heart cannot find in this earth such happiness as he desires. He may go incessantly astray in search of honours, riches and pleasures, but at last he finds that the whole mass of earthly good is insufficient to satisfy the wishes of his soul and the affections of his heart; so much so, that, in the gratification of his sinful appetites, he feels such an uneasiness and a void in his heart as leads him to long for some better good, which may be fit to satisfy the amplitude and extent of the demands of his heart. This means that man is created for good of a superior order and different nature to satisfy him, that is, for heavenly good, for the enjoying of the beautiful vision of God, where only is to be found that true, constant, full, and everlasting felicity for which he is created. Moses, having asked God (Exod. xxxiii. 18), ‘Show me Thy glory,’ God answered him (ib. 19), ‘I will show thee all good,’ which was to say that in Him he would find a perfect and finished happiness. Hence David (Ps. lxxxiii. 5) exclaims before God, ‘Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O

Lord : they shall praise Thee for ever and ever.' To this blessing all Christians are called, through the mercy of God, if they believe and trust in Him, and faithfully fulfil all their duties. As soon as the soul, loosed from the trammels of the body, shall reach the Infinite Good containing all goods, and shall contemplate Him face to face, and shall embrace Him by love, it shall find in Him such an immense abyss of ineffable pleasures and delights, that it shall have nothing else to long for, and so it shall be perfectly blessed for all eternity ! How sweet and delicious is Christian hope !

Now the Blessed Virgin possessed the virtue of hope in the highest degree to which a privileged creature could reach. This virtue was infused by God into the soul of Mary from the first instant of her immaculate conception, and was her faithful companion during the whole of her life. As Jesus Christ expected to come was the object of hope to the just of the Old Testament, so was He the object of the hope of Mary. She expected Him, and fervently prayed that He would soon come, and that through His merits she might be made a partaker of eternal glory. To this end she prayed continually, and exercised herself in the practice of all virtues. Her hope was strong, because founded on the persuasion that the coming Messiah, being omnipotent, would do everything for the fulfilment of His promises ; that He, being infinitely merciful, would wish the salvation and sanctification of souls ; and being most faithful in His promises, He would actually give all necessary graces for that purpose. Such was the hope of Mary before the mystery of the Incarnation was announced to her. And when she was made acquainted with this mystery, and the incarnation of the Son of God in her womb was accomplished, her hope highly improved at the presence of the dear object for whom she had hitherto hoped. She considered the salvation of the world depending on her Divine Son, she saw in Him the victim for the rescue of fallen man, and her calling by the divine will to co-operate in the great mystery of love. She accordingly firmly hoped to see the accomplishment of the great mystery, as well as to receive from God the grace to contribute herself by all means to it. St. John (1 Ep.

iii. 21, 22) says: 'If our heart do not reprehend us [that is, if we do not consent willingly to sin, so that our conscience cannot reprehend us for it], we have confidence towards God, and whatsoever we shall ask we shall receive of Him.' From this it is clear that purity of conscience (that is, the will determined not to offend God), brings into our souls faith and confidence of obtaining graces from God. This confidence is also increased in proportion to a man's good works, and the faithful fulfilment of the duties of his own state, as St. Paul teaches us (1 Tim. iii. 13): 'They that have ministered well shall purchase to themselves a good degree and much confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.' Then if by good works and the fulfilling of our own duties our confidence increases, what have we to say in regard to the Blessed Virgin, who lived such a pure life, so far from any spot of sin, and who attended most faithfully to her duties, and assiduously exercised good works to amplify divine glory? Undoubtedly her hope must have reached the high degree of moral certainty of obtaining all she asked for herself and all mankind. Her right intention, her sincerity of heart, her confidence in God, made her fit indeed to obtain everything. One of the beautiful fruits of her perfect hope was her marriage with Joseph. She, by the impulse of grace, had promised to God her perpetual virginity, and was firm and faithful in that promise. However, by the same impulse of grace, she was brought to marry Joseph. She knew well that God was the author of both engagements—that is, of keeping immaculate her virginity and of contracting with Joseph a true marriage. Hence she was sure that the second engagement could not be in the least dangerous to the first, and so she conceived the most strong confidence in God's bounty that, notwithstanding the marriage, Joseph would respect the sanctity of her vow. Nay, she was fully confident that Joseph himself was a lover of a virgin life, and would be but her guardian and defender. By such a persuasion and dependence on God's providence, she lived with Joseph till his death in the most innocent and pure conversation. What an admirable and rare example of confidence in the providence of God! What evidence for all of the assistance of God in

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the most difficult situations, to keep inviolate virginity and other virtues by trusting in Him !

Another instance of Mary's confidence in God was displayed in the fact of her being pregnant through the operation of the Holy Ghost without any knowledge of it on the part of Joseph. She saw Joseph growing much perplexed and troubled for what was going on, and was also aware of his design of leaving her in silence and going away. She was sensible of his suffering, and wished to relieve him from such a state. This would have been safely done by discovering to him the mystery, which would have been but honourable to her, and would have put an end to the pain of her husband. But her humility and the order of Providence did not allow her to do so. It was a good occasion of merit for both ; and the consolation which attended them by the mercy of the Son of God, deserved to be merited by such a trial. Mary, therefore, keeping silence on the matter, puts all her hope in God, trusting that God Himself would prevent Joseph from leaving her, would deliver him from his anxieties, and provide for her honour. Mary's heroic hope is soon rewarded by God, who cannot fail to console those who put all their confidence in Him, and through an angel the mystery of the Incarnation is revealed to Joseph, and thus both the peace of Joseph and the honour of Mary are assured. By this example our Blessed Mother teaches us to have no diffidence of divine help in any painful and trying situation, certain that, if our hope is firm in God, divine help will not be wanting ; so that either the threatened calamity would be removed, or at least converted into greater advantage for our souls. Such is the rule of loving Providence as is chanted by the Royal Psalmist (Ps. xxxvi. 29) : 'The salvation of the just is from the Lord, and He is their protector in the time of trouble.'

A more striking proof of the confidence of Mary in Jesus Christ is taken from the Gospel of St. John (ch. ii.), on the occasion of a marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, when, the wine failing, she asked a miracle from her Divine Son. The Saviour answered her that it was not their business to supply the wine, and besides the hour of working miracles had

not as yet come. So mysterious a refusal to anyone else would have been sufficient to destroy all hope. Nevertheless such was Mary's confidence of obtaining the miracle, that having no doubt of it, she told the waiters to go to her Divine Son, and do whatever He would wish them. They went, and Jesus Christ immediately and miraculously supplies the want. Mary had hoped against hope, and, as a reward, her Divine Son hastened the time fixed by Providence for working miracles. Finally, as Abraham was persuaded that the promise which God had made to him would be entirely verified, notwithstanding the sacrifice he was to make of his son Isaac, so Mary likewise felt strongly assured that, after all the humiliations, pains, sufferings and death of her beloved Son, she would see Him rising from the dead, and His Gospel subjugating the world. The hope of Mary, more firm than that of Abraham, was not disappointed. Such is the type of Christian virtue: all our thoughts, affections, and sighs, in the midst of tribulations, are to be turned towards God, the primary object of our hope, who, being omnipotent, merciful, and faithful, will console us in this world, and in due time make us partakers of heaven as a reward of our fidelity to Him in this earth.

The secondary objects of our hope are the means for obtaining eternal salvation, and among them the grace of God and good works, both equally necessary. With regard to the *grace of God*, it is a dogma of faith, that man without grace is unable to do anything worthy of eternal life. In other words, man without grace cannot perform any act of merit in order to obtain eternal life. He may do some actions naturally honest and good, deserving temporal blessings, but not meriting the supernatural rewards in relation to eternal glory. The doctrine of Jesus Christ upon this subject is plain enough. He says (John xv. 8), 'Without me' (that is, without my grace) 'you can do nothing.' What seems more easy than to conceive a good thought? Yet we are unequal to it without the grace of God, as the apostle teaches us (2 Cor. iii. 5): 'Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God.' The same apostle (Rom. xi. 6) observes that salvation is the effect

not so much of good works as of grace, saying: 'If by grace, it is not now by works; otherwise grace is no more grace.' And hence the same apostle, speaking of himself, says: 'By the grace of God I am what I am.' Our Blessed Lady had the persuasion that all her sanctity and greatness was only the effect of the grace of God, saying that God (Luke i. 48) 'hath regarded the humility of His handmaid.' And (ibid. ii. 49) she adds: 'He that is mighty hath done great things to me.' Therefore it is grace alone which excites our free-will by inspiring good thoughts, which perfects our liberty by changing our inordinate affections, which strengthens our good will to accomplish a good work when begun, and which supports it lest it fail. Grace acts in us in such a way that in the beginning it starts our will, and afterwards continues to accompany and aid it in its heavenly flight. Now the concurrence of our will with the grace which justifies, is imputed as merit to us, so that the work of our salvation cannot be accomplished without the concurrence of these two elements, *grace* and *freedom*: grace which gives necessary assistance, and freedom by which we act conformably to it. In conclusion, we must act in concert with the grace of God, as the apostle did (1 Cor. xv. 10): 'Not I, but the grace of God with me.' And again: 'I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me' (Philip. iv. 13). This is truly a great consolation for a Christian who is desirous of improving in virtue, to be able to say, I can do all things, if I only have the will to follow Jesus Christ with the fervour of His Blessed Mother. Though the Blessed Virgin was confirmed in grace, yet she increased daily more and more in merit before God, by the perfect use of her free-will in corresponding to the grace of God. The economy of grace is such as to form as it were a chain. As in a chain one ring is linked with another, so one grace may be said to be attached to another, one depending from the other; so that the more a Christian is faithful in corresponding to the graces already received, the more liberal is God in increasing their number. Now, as there has been no other creature who so faithfully corresponded to the grace of God as the Virgin Mary, so there has been no creature who received graces in such a number and quality as she did, so

that the number and extent of graces in her became immense, as we have demonstrated in the First Part of this work. Let us then learn by Mary to be faithful to the graces of God, and so make our salvation and sanctification sure.

A doubt may here occur about the receiving of grace, as it may be said that grace being a gratuitous gift of God, the Lord perhaps will give it, or perhaps will withhold it; so in spite of our will, if deprived of grace, we cannot attain salvation. The objection is soon answered by calling to mind that God is not like men—who through passion or false judgment may be partial—in the distribution of His favours. In God there is no passion, no mistake, no partiality for any one; as He, being bounty and justice by essence, wishes equally and sincerely the salvation and sanctification of all. Therefore the Catholic Church, by teaching that grace is a gratuitous gift of God, means to say, that grace is the effect of His bounty and mercy, and not a right we may have to it; so that we receive His grace, not by a title of justice, but only through His mercy. However, by this nobody must infer that God would deny His grace to anyone, particularly if he ask it. The mere thought of it would imply an offence against His infinite impartiality and mercy. ‘Ask,’ says Jesus Christ, ‘and you shall receive.’ The hope of salvation should be certain as far as it depends on God. The grounds of this certainty are, as we have already observed, the power, the mercy, and the fidelity of God to His promises. Hence St. Augustine, followed by the Council of Trent, says: ‘God does not command impossibilities; but by commanding anything, He admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for what you cannot do, and He assists you that you may be able to do it.’ The Christian therefore has nothing to fear on the part of God; he rather has to fear, and must fear, on the part of himself, of his becoming unfit for the grace of God and eternal salvation, on account of his ingratitude and want of correspondence with it.

Another means of obtaining eternal salvation is the exercise of *good works*. Indeed, St. James (ii. 14) says: ‘What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works? Shall faith be able to save him?’ Like-

wise St. Peter (2 Peter i. 10) exhorts the faithful to do good works, in order to make sure their salvation, saying : ‘ Labour the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election.’ Indeed, the words, good or bad, shall be the subject both of the particular and of the universal judgment, as it has been anticipated by Jesus Christ in the Gospel (Matt. xxv.), upon which St. Augustine (Lib. de Fid. et Oper. cap. xv.) says : ‘ If it were true that one could reach eternal life without the observance of the commandments, but through faith alone, which without good works is dead, how will it be with those that are found on the left when our Saviour says : *Go into everlasting fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels ?*’ He does not reproach them for their want of faith, but for their want of the performance of good works. Therefore St. Paul says (Gal. v. 6) : ‘ In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by charity.’ And St. James (ii. 17) adds : ‘ Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.’ Therefore faith, to justify, must be joined to good works, and good works to faith. The good works of Mary made her faith operative. Her life was full of good works animated by faith. Such must be the life of a Christian, and if it is so, then he is justified and sanctified.

A question may here occur : May he who, voluntarily and maliciously, is without the pale of the Roman Catholic Church, reasonably hope to be saved ? Let the holy fathers supply our answer. St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, and martyr in the second century (adv. Hæres. lib. i. c. iii.), says : ‘ The Church is the gate of life, but all the rest are thieves and robbers, and therefore to be avoided.’ St. Cyprianus, Bishop of Carthage, and martyr in the third century (Ep. lxii. alias 4), says : ‘ The house of God is but one, and none can obtain salvation save in the Church.’ In the fourth century, St. Chrysostom (Hom. I. in Pasch.) speaks thus : ‘ We know that salvation belongs to the Church alone, and that no one can partake of Christ, nor be saved, out of the Catholic Church and the Catholic faith.’ St. Augustine, in the same century (Ep. cxxxv. ed. Bened.), says : ‘ The Catholic Church alone is the Body of Christ. The Holy

Ghost gives life to no one who is out of this Body.' Again (Ep. ccviii.), he says: 'In the Catholic Church there are both good and bad; but those that have departed from her, as long as their opinions are opposite to hers, cannot be good; for though the conversation of some appears commendable, yet their very separation from the Church makes them bad, according to the words of our Saviour (Luke xi. 23): "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."'" Lactantius (lib. iv. Divin. Inst. c. xxx.) says: 'It is the Catholic Church only which retains the true worship. This Church is the fountain of truth, it is the house of faith, it is the temple of God. If anyone either comes not into this Church, or departs from it, his salvation must not be hoped for. No one must flatter himself obstinately, for his soul and salvation are at stake.' From these and like testimonies of the fathers of the Church, it is clear that out of the true Church of God (that is, the *Roman Church*, which is the only true one, as has been already shown), no salvation can be hoped for by those who *malá fide* remain out of it. The necessity for salvation of being a member of the true Church of God, and professing the true faith of Jesus Christ, is so evident, that the churches of England and Scotland admit such a principle as incontestable. The Church of England (in the eighth of the Thirty-nine Articles) admits and embraces the Athanasian Creed as containing nothing but divine truth. Now the said creed begins thus: 'Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith: which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.' The Church of Scotland, in her Confession of Faith (chap. xxv.), approved by the General Assembly in the year 1649, in the chapter upon the Church, speaks thus: 'The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel, consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.' To this Confession of Faith all their ministers are obliged to subscribe. A century before, when the Presbyterian religion first spread itself in

Scotland, there was a confession of faith authorised by Parliament, in the year 1560, in which (Art. xvi.) it is said : ‘ As we believe in one God, so we do most certainly believe that from the beginning there has been, and now is, and to the end of the world shall be, one Kirk, that is to say, one company and multitude of men chosen by God, who rightly worship and embrace Him by true faith in Jesus Christ, which Kirk is catholic, that is, universal; out of which Kirk there is neither life nor eternal felicity, and we utterly abhor the blasphemy of them that affirm that men that live according to equity and justice shall be saved, what religion soever they professed.’ Dr. Pearson, Bishop of Chester (in his Exposition of the Creed), says : ‘ The necessity of believing the Catholic Church appears in this, that Christ has appointed it as the only way to eternal life.’ Hence, from what has been stated, according also to the Protestant churches and divines, out of the true Church of Jesus Christ there is no way to salvation for those who are gone astray. But as no church may claim the right of being called the *true Church of Christ*, and to have the title or epithet of *Catholic*, except the *Church of Rome*, as has been fully proved before, it follows that out of the communion of the Church of Rome salvation is not to be hoped for by those who by a *culpable* ignorance, or *malá fide*, are separated from it.

## CHAPTER IV.

## ON THE IMITATION OF THE CHARITY OF MARY.

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*SECTION I.*

## ON CHARITY IN GENERAL.

THE Christian law is a law of love, in which the bounty and wisdom of God beautifully shine. Indeed, what are the laws of Minos, Lycurgus, Solon, and other wise men of old, when put in comparison with the precepts of Christian charity? This precept has been given to men by God Himself, and tends to form an admirable union of one man with another, of one community of men with another, and of all men with God, so as to compose of the whole world but one family. Love is the essence of Christian perfection, and the binding of the members of the true Church of Christ. He wishes to be loved by all Christians with feelings of one and the same love in accordance with the profession of one and the same faith. Hence the Apostle of the Gentiles (Rom. xiii. 10) says, 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.' The same apostle (Coloss. iii. 14) says: 'Above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection.' All virtues, according to the observation of St. Augustine, are but the order of love (Lib. de Morib. Eccl.). Love is the root and spring of all good, so that without love there is no real virtue. Indeed, what becomes of faith, hope, and religion without love? Other virtues, if they are not vivified by charity, become putrid like a corpse, and of no avail. The apostle (1 Cor. xiii. 1-3) says: 'If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and



should know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profiteth nothing.' Therefore charity is the queen of all virtues, the most necessary of all, and consists principally in loving God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves. Such was the twofold commandment of God in the Old Testament, and such is the twofold precept of Jesus Christ in the new dispensation (Deut. vi. 5, and Luke x. 27): 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.' Our Saviour calls the precept of loving God 'the greatest and first commandment.' (Matt. xxii. 38.) He calls it *first*, because it is the foundation of all other precepts, and of all Christian perfection. He calls it *greatest*, because all other virtues without charity are nothing, and having charity for their motive even the meanest virtues acquire great weight and merit.

Man is naturally brought to love God, as the supreme indefectible good, worthy in Himself to be loved by His creatures, and this love is shown in the fulfilment of His precepts, as our Blessed Saviour declared (John xiv. 15): 'If you love me, keep my commandments.' The commandments of God were already written in the mind of man in the natural law (Ps. iv. 7): 'The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us.' However, as through the long habit of sinning the natural love was blotted out from the human heart, God caused His commandments to be written by Moses, and engraved them in stone, and placed them before the eyes of men, so that none should plead excuse for not observing them. There is no commandment of God whose observance may be termed impossible. If anyone should dare to say *that some precepts of God are impossible to be observed by the just who wish and endeavour to observe them with the divine grace which they implore*, he would assert a proposition already condemned by the Church against Calvin and Jansenius in the œcumenical Council of Trent, under

the sentence of excommunication. Indeed, when God commands or advises anything, we are certain by faith that we can do such a thing. It is not possible that God should command or require of us to carry burdens which would be intolerable or superior to our strength, as the said council teaches us that God is ready to give us the necessary strength and graces to fulfil the commandments. And such a doctrine is founded upon the words of Jesus Christ (Matt. xi. 30): 'My yoke is sweet, and my burthen light;' and upon what St. Paul affirms: 'I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me' (Phil. iv. 13). God having commanded the observance of His law under the penalty of eternal damnation (Matt. xix. 17), 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments,' and He being desirous that we should be saved, is mercifully giving us His grace to know and observe them. The following sections of the present chapter will show how the Blessed Virgin possessed in perfection both charity towards God, and charity towards her neighbour.

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## SECTION II.

### ON THE LOVE OF MARY TOWARDS GOD.

IN the first place, the Blessed Virgin loved God with *all her heart*—that is, with all her will. There was in her heart no division between God and the world, between the Creator and creature, between the desires of the spirit and those of the flesh; there was no inclination, no affection, no love for anything of this world opposed or contrary to the law of God; but on the contrary, all her inclinations, affections, and love were centred in God. The heart of Mary was a continual flame of pure love, burning before the altar of the Most High Trinity, and contemplating the divine perfections with all the intensity which enabled her to exclaim with the spouse of the sacred Canticles (ii. 16): 'My beloved to me, and I to him.' St. Jerome says that such was the love of Mary towards God, that the very seraphim of heaven could descend and learn of her. The ordinary actions of her daily

life being done only to please God, and directed to His sole glory, they could not prevent her from continually loving Him, while her love to God was no hindrance to her perfect performance of all domestic and social duties. To love God means the same as to serve Him faithfully according to the obligations imposed by the true religion and by one's own state. Duties performed with the intention of pleasing God and of showing forth His glory, are works and proofs of love entitled to a special degree of glory (St. Thomas 2, 3, quæst. xxiv., art. 6). A faithful soldier, while watching and minding the things belonging to his military service, loves his sovereign. A faithful soldier of Jesus Christ and a faithful client of Mary shows likewise his love towards Jesus and Mary by performing duly the particular duties of his state, and attending both to contemplative and active life. The meditation of the Holy Bible and other books of piety brings our mind to the love of God. St. Augustine (Serm. xii. de Temp.) says: 'He who wishes to be always with God must often pray and read; then God speaks to us.' Of course it is understood that St. Augustine spoke of the reading of the Holy Scriptures and other books of piety and religion. All Christians, particularly in youth, ought to avoid the study of bad books, novels, comedies, and scandalous papers, as the most dangerous and capital enemy not only of the love of God, but of piety, innocence, and morality, and the spring of all sorts of vices and immorality. As the reading of a good book may make a saint of a most profligate sinner, so the reading of a bad book may transform a saint into a devil. Experience shows this. The Blessed Virgin was continually occupied in reading the Holy Scriptures and contemplating them. St. Ambrose (in Psal. cviii.) says: 'We must, night and day without intermission, meditate upon the Holy Scriptures.' St. John Chrysostom (Homil. xl.) admonishes us that 'Jesus Christ does not say, Read the Scriptures, but *Search the Scriptures*, that is, search with labour and perseverance into the mysterious treasures of the Scriptures, in the same way as you would search for gold and silver in the metallic veins of the earth.' However, there are some passages of Holy Writ which, in spite of all

the diligence and labour of the reader, cannot be understood, even by the learned, as St. Peter declares to be the case with the Epistles of St. Paul. It is, therefore, required that the Holy Scriptures should be read together with the comments approved by the Catholic Church as the competent authority to explain to Christians the true sense of the Scripture. Indeed, having already proved that the Catholic Church is the true teaching Church of Christ, divinely assured of security from error, it follows that it belongs to her alone to judge what is the true sense of the Word of God, and consequently in the interpretation of the Holy Bible all private judgment is to be excluded. Hence a Catholic, receiving from his Church the Bible with its interpretations, is sure to receive the true doctrine of Christ, and, by believing it, believes in God who revealed it.

In the second place, the Blessed Virgin loved God *with her whole soul*, that is, *without any restriction or reservation*. According to tradition, Mary in her earliest period of life gave us a most beautiful example of love to God, by leaving her house and parents to follow His will. As God, after creating the universe, directs all material things to the end for which He created them, as appears in the sun, the moon, the seasons, &c.; so does He direct, and must direct, the rational and free beings, so that a man ought to make use of his free-will according to the will of his Creator, and choose that state of life which is pleasing to Him. This is a particular duty of a young Christian, to show his dependence and love to God. Indeed, as it is the king who, according to his will, designs his subjects to different offices of the kingdom, nor do the subjects take upon themselves such or such an office; in like manner, when a Christian has to embrace a state of life, it is not allowed him in such a serious and responsible undertaking to proceed by himself according to his own caprice or human regards; but it belongs to God to call him to such a state as befits him, according to the dispositions of Divine Providence; so that, before taking any resolution, he ought to consult God by fervent prayer, and take the advice of the lawful ministers of God, and, in particular, of his spiritual father as the interpreter of the divine will. The neglect of

this important rule in Christian society is the cause of the most grievous disorders, besides depriving the individual of such graces as were prepared by God for his salvation and sanctification in that state to which he was called by God. Among Christians there are unfortunately many troubled and afflicted for having embraced a state to which they were not called. Mary certainly did not so. She already practised in anticipation the precept of her beloved Son (Luke xiv. 20): 'If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' Of course this is only meant when they are a hindrance from the fulfilment of the will of God. Mary was united to God in perfect love since the time of her immaculate conception, and during her infancy, being at home, served God faithfully. At the beginning of her childhood, hearing the voice of the Holy Ghost (Ps. xlv. ii.), 'Hearken, O daughter, and see and incline thy ear, and forget thy people and thy father's house, and the king shall greatly desire thy beauty,' she, sacrificing family comforts and the love of her parents, left her father's house, and ran, as we learn from antiquity, to the house of God, in order to serve Him more perfectly, and to be more closely united to Him. The whole of Mary's life may be termed a continual sacrifice to please God. There is indeed no sacrifice, even the most painful, which is not accomplished by love. Sacrifices made for the love of God are accompanied with calmness and peace of soul, as was the case with Mary, who could say of herself (Isaias xxxviii. 17): 'In peace is my bitterness most bitter.' St. Chrysostom says: 'A good conscience is the greatest festival.' St. Peter feels no terror in the confines of a dark prison. St. Paul superabounded with joy in the midst of the greatest tribulations. St. Andrew being crucified, appears as seated on a throne of glory, calling others to imitate him. St. Stephen, while stoned to death, is calm as if he were receiving a sweet dew from Paradise. Daniel in the den of lions, the three children in the furnace of Babylon, Jeremias in the bottom of a well, and other believers in like extremities, were all peace and joy. Such

is the effect of the love of God : to suffer everything in peace for the object of the love. If many sacrifices are made for the love of the creatures, why then should not the same be done for the love of the Creator ? Is it not just to love God at least with a love of *preference*—that is, to prefer the love of God to the love of anything else, and to endure any temporal evil rather than to offend him ? Thus the love of Mary was perfectly imitated by the illustrious champion of Christian fortitude, Sir Thomas More, when Henry VIII. wanted him to adhere to the Reformation. It was indeed a great pain for him to lose the friendship of his king, to be deprived of all his temporal goods, to be put into prison, to be condemned to death, and leave his beloved wife and dear children destitute and deprived of all temporal means ; but, as he loved God in preference to all, so he preferred to lose all and to endure any suffering rather than displease God. Audin (*Life of Henry VIII.*, London, 1852, p. 251) relates the interview of the wife and daughter of More in the prison, to induce him to take the oath commanded by Henry, and says : ‘ With what pious art did Margaret array her arguments, which she, poor creature, thought irresistible. . . . She thought not of something that was more powerful—her tears and her kisses. Had More been actuated by his feelings as a father, he would have yielded ; but he was a Christian, and therefore he resisted. Christ, the apostles, the fathers of the Church, the doctors of canon law, the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth . . . all cried out to me, “Take not the oath.” “But, father,” said Margaret, “people here below do not always act as they intended : you may change your opinion ; and heaven grant that it may not be too late !” “God forbid !” replied the prisoner ; “the more acute my sufferings, the quicker shall I be delivered. I place all my hope in Jesus Christ ; He will not allow me to yield—God will not desert me. Courage, Meg ; and do not be annoyed at anything that may happen in this world : the will of God alone be done.” . . . After Margaret came Lady More. “What are you doing here ?” was the first salutation to her husband on entering his cell ; “a man like you—you are a fool !—stopping in a miserable cell, a companion of rats and mice, while you

might be at court if you would only follow the example of all the bishops, of all learned men in the kingdom. At Chelsea you had a nice little cottage, a library, a gallery, a fruit and flower garden, and all that could make life comfortable. How can you, in God's name, remain here?" More allowed her to go on, and when she had finished, said, "My dear wife, I wish to ask you a question: tell me, is not this cell as near heaven as our house at Chelsea?" "There you are again with your nonsense," rejoined Alice. "No, no nonsense," added More; "reply to my question." "Oh my God! as if this were a time to act so childish," said Alice. "Pardon me," rejoined the prisoner; "if my house at Chelsea is not nearer heaven than the Tower, why should I change my abode? Again one more question: how much longer do you think I may live?" "Twenty years, at least." "Indeed! And should you have said a hundred, I could not risk an eternity for the life of a century." So More loved God above all things, and did not hesitate to sacrifice everything to His love.' This is a special obligation for us all who are urged by gratitude and interest. *Gratitude* requires it for several reasons. God has loved us without any allurements on our part, as we were nothing before we were created, and after our creation we were sinners through original and perhaps actual sin, and therefore we were to God an object, not of love, but of *contempt*. Besides, He loved us without any advantage on His part, as He is infinitely happy in Himself, and our love does not increase His happiness, as in like manner our disloyalty does not diminish it. Moreover, He gave His only-begotten Son for our Redemption; and our Blessed Saviour loved us more than His life, because it was for us that He sacrificed His rest, His pleasure, His reputation, His glory, His life. But not only gratitude, but *interest* also, compels us to love God, as our eternal salvation depends upon our loving God. There is prepared in Heaven a place for His faithful followers, as there is prepared a place in hell for all those who do not love Him. If we love heaven we must love God, to whom alone heaven belongs, and from whom alone we can receive it.

Moreover, God, being the Creator of our soul, wishes the

possession of it for Himself, to reign alone in it to the exclusion of any profane love. He does not admit any division in the human heart. He alone has supremacy over any other love. He declares that nobody can serve two masters who require at once different obedience—nobody may love God and sin, truth and falsehood, God and the devil. Nobody can be a Catholic in the exterior and an Anglican in faith—to hold with Canterbury and yet incline towards Rome; to have flowers, candlesticks, crosses, crucifixes, cloths, incense, altar lights, cassocks, chalices, chasubles, copes—nay, fasting, confession, communion, office hours, and daily mass, and still profess heresy; to look upon the symbols and disregard reality; on pretence of being a Catholic, to receive from a Catholic priest absolution and communion, and to remain out of the Roman faith and Catholic communion. This, I say, is but a deception of the advanced school of Ritualism. To have the true love of God, it is quite necessary to hold the true faith of Jesus Christ, and to communicate with the Roman Bishop, the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Likewise, it would be an absurdity to have the heart attached to gold and silver, to honours and earthly grandeur, to the pleasures of the flesh, and pretend to possess the love of God and have a right to His inheritance. God is one, and He does not admit any idol in His company. When the Philistines introduced the ark of the Lord into the temple of Dagon, the idol would not remain in his place at the presence of the Ark, but repeatedly fell down. God wishes to be alone in the temple of our soul, and to be loved and worshipped by all with the same pure faith and predominant love. Hence, to pretend to admit two opposite loves, both pleasing to God, would be an absurdity, for the obvious reason that if one of them is pleasing to God, the other must be detested and abhorred by Him. Such is the absurdity of the principle that every religion is pleasing to God, that every man can be a judge of his own faith, and that every one is allowed at his pleasure to form a system of religion to himself. No man has any right to establish any system of religion and a manner of worship by himself, but he must learn it from the Roman Church, which is the mistress



of Christians and the depository of divine revelation. St. Augustine (Epist. clii. ad Donat.) plainly says: 'Anyone who is separated from the Catholic Church, though he thinks he is living uprightly, yet, on account of the crime of his being separated from the unity of Christ, he shall not have life, but the punishment of God is upon him.' The spirit of the Catholic Church, transfused into her by the Divine Founder, is a spirit of unity in faith and charity, in doctrine and communion, so that by this characteristic she has to be distinguished and preached as the sole true one throughout the world. What a happiness for Noah and his family at the time of the universal flood to find themselves safely in the ark, while all the rest of mankind was drowned by the waters! No less is it the happiness of a Catholic to see himself in the true Church, holding the very same doctrine that was received by the apostles, and out of all danger of error or mistake! This ark of the new Noah, this ship of Peter, has seen with regret in all times some of her mariners going astray, professing in other ships a new and different faith; but sooner or later she has seen likewise the same ships miserably sinking and drowning. In the history of the Church of Rome appears the beginning, the progress, and the end of all heresies. Therefore, God being one, and His Church one, founded by Jesus upon Peter and his successors in the Roman see, it follows that every Christian, if he does not like to be drowned by the waters of schism and heresy, ought to love God and serve Him exclusively in the Roman Church. A decision is required to emerge from any state of uncertainty. A Christian doubtful in his faith is like an infidel. There is no mistake: man cannot serve two masters. It is a damnable presumption to wish to divide the service of both. God does not allow such a division. He requires our hearts for Himself alone. Behold how the Prophet Elias urged the Jewish people (3 Reg. xviii. 21): 'How long will you halt between two sides? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.'

In the third place, our Blessed Lady loved God with *all her mind*—that is, offering up all her intellect to the truths of

faith and to the will of God. Our natural pride, of course, feels a difficulty in believing the mysteries of religion without knowing the reasons of them, and therefore it brings us to investigate them with curiosity to obtain that knowledge which belongs only to God. The enemy of mankind on this particular point tempts us as he did our forefathers. He said to them, 'You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' But it is to be remembered that such a curiosity cost them no less than the loss of the terrestrial Paradise, and all evils which were the consequence of their sin. The Virgin Mary had her intellect so humble, and so subjected to divine authority, that she believed blindly all the mysteries of religion with more certainty of their truth than if she had understood them clearly from her own intellect. In particular, when the angel told her that she had to conceive a Son through the operation of the Holy Ghost, and yet remain a virgin, she knew not how it could be done: nevertheless, she being filled with faith, and fully believing in her loving God, said without hesitation, 'Be it done unto me according to thy word.' Hence St. Augustine (de Sanct. Virg. c. iii.) says: 'Mary is more blessed for believing in the faith of Christ than for conceiving the flesh of Christ.' Religion must have mysteries, as it is necessary there should be something in religion to humble human pride and vain curiosity. Now a mystery is an obvious means for this end, as mystery is a merciless master, who compels us continually to humble our pride, on consideration of our weakness and ignorance. Moreover, to believe mysteries without understanding them, shows also our adhesion to the will of God, and is a spring of merit for Paradise, as it was in the case of Mary.

In the fourth place, Mary loved God *with all her strength*, viz., with all the powers of the soul and the senses of the body, and all the means she had at her disposal, doing everything for the glory of God. She was a holocaust entirely offered to her loving God. Her memory was employed in remembering the commandments of the law of God, and considering the particular benefits received by her. Her intellect dwelt upon correspondence with the graces of God, and the means to become more and more acceptable in His

eyes. Her will was all occupied in actually loving the Object of her veneration. Her eyes were employed in looking at the marvellous productions of creation, and other objects which brought her to God. Her ears were shut to any profanity, and opened to hear the word of God, and whatever could contribute to His glory. Her taste was only to do the will of God. She inhaled only the odour of virtues. Her feelings in all things were mortified for God. Her inferior appetites were directed solely to God. She was happy when God was honoured, and was sorry when He was offended. She was afraid of nothing but what would displease Him. Her eating, drinking, sleeping, watching, going out, or staying at home, was done but with the intention of pleasing God. Her love towards God produced in her the most religious observance, not only of the precepts of God and the Church, and of all the obligations of her state, but also of what was an affair of minute consideration. By her edifying conduct and private exhortations she induced others to love God. Besides, as the only motive of the actions of Mary was the love of God, this motive caused that all her actions became perfect. Moreover, from the purpose she had of suffering everything for the object of her love, she exhibited the most constant, patient love in all kinds of trials and afflictions, which evince she loved God with all her strength.

A Christian may easily imitate the example of Mary in loving God with all his thoughts and strength, provided he be disposed to do what he can, assisted by the grace of God. First of all he must observe all the commandments of God and of His Church, as Jesus Christ plainly says (John xiv. 21), 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is who loveth me.' Besides, it is required to have a right intention to do everything, not for self-love, or through human respect, or to please creatures, but only to please our Creator and Redeemer. As our good works receive perfection from the love with which they are done, and their merit is in proportion to the perfection of the love, so Mary's love, being of the highest order, we may imagine how her merit was eminent and proportionately superior. Many good

Christians lose a great deal of merit in their good actions through want of a right intention in offering all they do to God and His glory, while others, having such a right intention, cause to be meritorious before God all their good works—nay, even actions which are termed *indifferent*, such as sleeping, eating, walking, and the like, if done in the spirit with which Mary did them. Moreover, if God is so liberal that He will not let pass without reward a single glass of water given for the love of Him to our neighbour, how much more liberal will He be with those who employ themselves in extending His glory by works of charity and religion! What a beautiful sign of true love of God in a soul, when she procures the conversion of a Catholic sinner, or one of those who are outside the Church! On the other hand, it is very painful to think that man is so industrious and diligent in the search for temporal advantages, and is at the same time so negligent and indolent where eternal interests are at stake! To have all his thoughts placed upon that which is very soon to pass away, and not to give one serious consideration to that which will never end! To strive to clear all doubts about temporal business, in order to avoid losses and have security, and yet not to wish to think a little in order to clear his mind of doubts concerning faith and everlasting life! Tertullian (Apol. c. 50) says: ‘If a man studies the Christian religion, no doubt he becomes a Christian.’ The same may be said of any dissenter from Catholicity. If he would but examine and study without prejudice the Catholic religion, he cannot fail to become a Catholic. But what opinion should be formed of those who shut their eyes and ears not to see and hear the truth? An Anglican lady lately wrote: ‘I fear to find the truth in the Roman Catholic Church. I do not want to be convinced of the truth of that creed. I would not go near a Catholic priest, or hear a Catholic sermon, for fear of being converted to your Church’ (Weekly Register, June 8, 1867). What excuse shall persons of this description have before God for their remaining out of the true Church? However, we must add that the said lady who declined to go near a Catholic priest, or hear a Catholic sermon, has been already received into the Catholic Church,

and she is very happy to be there. Anyone that is born out of the pale of the Roman Church, when arrived at the age of discretion, and is capable of knowing what is right or wrong, is obliged to study religion, and see what are the marks by which the Catholic Church is distinguished from other religious establishments; so that, if he wilfully omit such an examination, he becomes responsible for his ignorance of the true religion. Ignorance of the true religion, when culpable, is no excuse before God. The plea of the Jews was their ignorance; nevertheless, they were no less culpable. They had been condemned as guilty, though they were not persuaded of the divinity of Jesus Christ—a matter of serious consideration!

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### SECTION III.

ON THE CONFORMITY OF MARY'S WILL TO THE WILL OF GOD.

LOVE is the tie of two wills; so that the stronger the tie is, the more perfect is the love. Now, was not Mary of all creatures the most tied to God? And then, was she not more loving than any other? According to the holy fathers already quoted, the love of Mary was so burning that it surpassed even that of the seraphim themselves. Indeed, the more a soul knows God—His infinite bounty, His inexpressible beauty, and His other divine attributes and adorable perfections—the more, consequently, it loves Him, as an object most worthy of its love. But Mary, knowing God much better and more perfectly than any other creature, she loved Him more perfectly than any other. Hence it was that she followed His will in the most perfect and accomplished manner, conforming perfectly her will to that of God in all things. She could truly say: 'My Beloved is mine, and I am His.' That is, the will of my Beloved is my will, and my will is His, my will being quite conformable to His will. His will is the only rule of my actions. St. Jerome says that 'true friendship consists in wishing or not wishing what the friend wishes or wishes not.' Hence, to

be a friend of God, means to fulfil His will in all things. Such was Mary. What God wished, Mary likewise wished; and what God did not wish, Mary did not wish. Now, a threefold principle of faith, according to which our Blessed Lady conformed her will to that of God, is to be remarked. First, that the will of God is the rule of the free actions of rational creatures; so that he who acts according to the will of God is just, and he who acts differently is a sinner. Secondly, that everything which happens in this world happens by the will of God, either positive or permissive. Thirdly, that anything which happens in this world is directed by God to the good of His rational creatures. The right understanding and the practice of these three alleged principles is calculated to make a true lover of God.

I. First, the *will of God is the rule of the free actions of rational creatures*. To understand this truth, it is necessary to observe, with St. Thomas (i. p. 2, art. 4), that the will of God is the cause of the whole creation; and, consequently, that all actions of the creatures ought to depend upon His will. Indeed, it was God that, by an act of his free will, formed the world from nothing; as the Royal Psalmist sings (Ps. xxxii. 9): ‘He spoke, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created.’ Likewise, it is God who preserves all created things, and upholds us every moment with the same creating power by which He made us; as the apostle says to the Hebrews (i. 3): ‘Upholding all things by the word of His power.’ Now, as it was the will of God which created and upholds all, so the same has to govern them, in order that they may be guided by the same Hand that made and upholds them. God, therefore, has the right to command, to direct, and to govern us; and such a right only belongs to Him, as He alone is the independent Creator and Upholder of all, not subject to anyone; and He is to Himself the law of His operations, as the same St. Thomas (i. p. q. 2, art. 1 and 2) observes: ‘God is law to Himself.’ He alone can will anything with His own will, because His will is the right one itself, and is naturally the rule of any other will. Hence St. Paul (ad Ephes. i. 11) says, that God ‘worketh all things according to the counsel of His will.’

It is, therefore, only God who wills, and must will, of His own will, whatever pleases Him, not having anyone superior to Him. Hence, when man wishes to act according to his own will, and wishes not to conform his will to that of God, he would, as it were, snatch the crown from God; like a subject of a temporal king putting on his head the crown belonging to his sovereign. Indeed, as the same subject would commit a great crime in wishing to take away from his king the crown, so infinitely greater is the crime of a rational being who refuses to follow the will of God, in order to act according to his own will. Therefore, he who acts according to the will of God is just, and he who acts otherwise is a sinner.

The Blessed Virgin had no will of her own. She never intended to please herself or to follow her own inclination. She always, either by words or by facts, said to God: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word.' Thy voice, my Beloved, is too dear to my ears, is too sweet to my heart, is too powerful not to make me run to follow immediately everywhere my Love. Nazareth, Bethlehem, Egypt, Jerusalem, are places equally desirable to me, when in accordance with Thy will. To be unkindly refused lodgings, to be obliged to stay in a stable, to be compelled to leave my dear country, and undertake a painful journey, to have to live in the midst of a strange and pagan people, to have to remain in poverty, and even be separated from the only object of my love; nay, to have myself to consent to sacrifice Him: all these destinies, however unpleasant and arduous they be, yet, in that they are the will of my God, become for my heart the most wholesome and savoury bread. The will of my God is the sole ruling principle of my will; be it pleasing to me or displeasing, it matters not. I have to look, not for my pleasure and satisfaction, but for the pleasure and approval of the sovereign will of God. What happiness for a Christian to have the like disposition! Indeed, the greatest felicity to a rational being is to wish what his Creator wishes. In this precisely, true happiness consists. The blessed in heaven are happy, because their will is one with God's will. Everyone must look for this

felicity. As the command of the father is the rule of the actions of the child, as the will of the sovereign is the rule of the actions of the subject, as the will of the captain is the rule of the actions of the soldier, so the will of God is the rule of the actions of rational creatures. And, as a son is said to be good when he obeys his father, a subject his king, a soldier his captain; so a Christian is good when he obeys God, and he is bad when he refuses to comply with His holy will.

II. An objection, however, may be brought against the doctrine just stated. It may be said, when a man has evidence that such a thing is wished by God, there is no question but that he is obliged to comply with God's will. But in many cases it seems rather difficult for man to judge if such and such a thing is willed by God, in particular with regard to some events which appear to be the effect of natural causes, or the result of human malice. Now, to answer the difficulty, we establish the following principle of faith: *Everything which happens in this world, happens by the will of God, either positively or permissively*, and we are obliged to see in all things the will of God, and, therefore, conform our will to His. The will of God is displayed in a twofold manner: as positively, when He wills or commands something to be done or omitted; and negatively or permissively, as when He only permits or suffers something to be done. His *positive* will is seen, first, in the effects of natural causes: thus, the sun produces light, heat, &c., and at their respective seasons vegetation and harvest appear; or as from the distemper of the humours of the body, illness ensues. Secondly, in virtuous actions springing from free causes, because it is by the will of God and His grace that we are virtuous. The *negative* or *permissive* will of God occurs when God permits bad actions to be done by free will of men, as stealing, striking, slandering, &c. Though these actions are not willed by God, nevertheless, according to the order of Providence, they are permitted by Him, that man's free will may not be annihilated, and in such a permission of God we ought to acknowledge His will on our behalf, by bearing and enduring everything with resignation. The example of Job will illustrate this



doctrine. Intelligence is brought to him that his oxen and his asses had been ravaged by an incursion of the Sabeans, and his servants slain with the sword. Another comes to say that the fire of God had fallen from heaven, and consumed the sheep and the servants. Again, a report arrives that the Chaldeans had taken away all his camels, and slain the servants. Another says, 'thy sons and daughters were eating and drinking in the house of their elder brother, and a violent wind arose and shook the four corners of the house, and it fell upon thy children, and they are dead.' Amid such an accumulation of the most desolating misfortunes, what says Job, what does he? We have it from Holy Writ. He said: 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it has pleased the Lord, so be it done; blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job i. 21, 22). But is it not true that the mischief has been done by the Sabeans, and by the Chaldeans, by the fire, and by the wind? Yes; but equally true it is, says Job, that it is God that wishes my sorrow, my grief, my desolation; as it has pleased the Lord, so is it done. God permits the robbery and cruelty of the Sabeans and Chaldeans, and also the action of the fire and wind, in order to punish and afflict me: 'Blessed be the name of the Lord.' Another instance of full and perfect subjection to the will of God in the work of human malice is found in King David. While passing amid his soldiers, below the mountain, on his way to Bahurim, he was grievously insulted by a man named Semei, who from the summit of the mountain cursed the king as a man of blood and of Belial, and threw stones at him. Abisai, the valiant captain of David, wanted to ascend the mountain and cut off the head of the rebel; but David prevented him, saying: 'Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bid him curse David' (2 Reg. xvi. 10). How could David say that God bid Semei to curse him? The action of Semei was very sinful and injurious to David, and forbidden by God. Why, then, could David say that it was commanded by God? Is God the author of iniquity? The answer is, that while God, indeed, is not the author of iniquity, yet He does not prevent it, but allows that iniquity should reign in the world to the end, as St. Augustine

observes, either that the unjust may be converted, or that the just through him may have occasion to prove his fidelity. Hence David said that God bade Semei curse him, not absolutely and positively, but negatively and permissively, inasmuch as God did not hinder the crime of Semei, in order that through it the virtue of David should be improved. Moreover, David himself being aware of his former sins, saw in the crime of Semei the avenging hand of God, and therefore commanded Abisai not to kill the rebel, but to leave him to continue to be the instrument of God's justice. Lastly, David, by leaving Semei the liberty of continuing to offend him, as far as the will of God would allow, left us this maxim, that it is not enough to bear patiently an injury once, but that it is necessary to persevere in suffering the same injury as long as it is pleasing to God to allow it.

The Blessed Virgin is the type of a Christian conformity to the will of God. Of the contempts and ill-usages she met with, when admittance was refused to her by the inhabitants of Bethlehem, she made no complaint; but regarded them as the instruments of the will of God. When the cruelty of Herod compelled her to flee into Egypt, she said not a word of disappointment, but adored in silence the will of God, remaining there for several years. She did not ask when her exile would have an end, but she patiently awaited the moment willed by Providence. The envy, the hatred, the unjust persecutions by the enemies of her beloved Son, afforded constant opportunities for her to adore the will of God, who permitted their sins for the accomplishment of the work of redemption. Now this truth of faith being presupposed, that everything in this world takes place by the will of God, either positively or negatively, it follows that we must subject ourselves to all human events, acknowledging in them the will of God, albeit such events are in no way grateful to our self-love, or consonant with our advantages.

III. Moreover the temporal loss we may fear to incur in the fulfilment of the will of God, is abundantly compensated by the comfort we obtain from another principle of faith, that *whatsoever happens in this world is directed by God for our good*. The reason of it is clear: God, being the infinite good, can-

not on His part desire our evil ; on the contrary, He is ever wishing our real good. Hence St. Peter (1 Peter v. 7) says : ' Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you.' Hence anything which is wished by God, by His will either positive or negative, is directed to our good. This may happen in three different ways.

First. God, by permitting the temporal losses of His creatures, aims at their conversion, if they are sinners. Manasses was one of the most impious and wicked kings of Israel ; he had introduced idolatry, caused the death of the prophet Isaiah, and was guilty of the most horrible impieties. God's wrath at last came upon him ; an army of the king of Syria invaded his kingdom, took him prisoner, and brought him a slave to Babylon. In his misfortune, Manasses saw the will of God punishing him, did sincere penance for his sins, and repaired as far as he could all the mischief he had done. Thus the state of slavery to which Manasses had been reduced by his sins was the cause of his conversion. Likewise the tempest met by Jonas when disobedient to the command of God, was the means of his return to the obedience of God, and to the fulfilment of his mission at Nineveh. Naaman the Syrian, the great general of the army of Benadab, had the misfortune to have his body covered with leprosy, and his illness was the occasion of his conversion from idolatry to the worship of God. A Jewish female, a servant of his wife, advised him to go to Samaria and present himself to the prophet Eliseus. He did so : and having obeyed the command of the prophet by washing himself seven times in the river Jordan, he was perfectly cured, and went back to his country no more an idolater, but a true believer in God, so that the shameful malady was to Naaman the cause of his eternal salvation. The poor man in the gospel being afflicted with palsy, had for eight and thirty years borne his infirmity, and it was the occasion of his being cured both in body and soul, as Jesus Christ told him : ' Behold thou art made whole ; sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee.' Hence God, by permitting illness or losses to sinners, seeks their conversion and salvation.

In the second place, God, by willing temporal misfortune to His creatures, intends to grant them in compensation some particular favour. Joseph, the son of Jacob, seems to be the most unfortunate child in the world: he is the object of calumny, envy, persecution, and ill-treatment on the part of his brothers. When he entered Egypt and was sold as a slave, everyone must pity him; and much more, when he was put into prison, in consequence of the most infamous calumny. Nevertheless, this long series of misfortunes was, in the hands of God, so many steps by the ascent of which he was finally raised in triumph to be the vice-king of Egypt. Who could have foretold that so great happiness awaited him? However, it was purchased by his conformity to the will of God during his long trials. Saul likewise had the misfortune to miss the asses belonging to his father, and was anxiously searching everywhere to find them. This disaster, however, was the cause of his being created king by the prophet of God, who met him in the way: thus he sought the asses, and found a crown. How mysterious are the ways of God! who can understand them? We can but bow before His loving Providence in lowly adoration. It was hard for Mary and Joseph to see the Son of God born in a manger through poverty; but how great was their consolation when they heard the melody of the angelic spirits round the stable, and saw the shepherds and kings coming to adore Him! The flight into Egypt, painful as it was, had no few compensations, on account of the conversions of the idolaters, as we learn from tradition. The loss of the infant Jesus was followed by the joy of finding Him. The witnessing of the private life of Jesus Christ accompanied by his humiliations and sufferings, was compensated by the joy of the corporal presence of the Son of God. The scourging, the crowning with thorns, the carrying of the cross, and the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ, were the providential means by which Mary had the consolation of seeing at last the glorious resurrection of her beloved Son, and the complete salvation of mankind. It is an observation of St. Irenæus (*adv. Hær. lib. iii. c. 33*) that the perfect con-

formity of Mary to the will of God has greatly contributed to our salvation. He says: 'Mary by her perfect submission to the divine Will, has been the cause of our salvation.'

Lastly, it is to be considered that God, by permitting and willing disappointments, trials, disasters, and misfortunes of every kind in this world, intends to wipe away the tears of His faithful servants, and to increase the merit for their everlasting glory. Poor Lazarus, naked, trembling, starving and bruised, was regarded by Almighty God with a smile of encouragement and assurance during his trials; and when dead, was received by Him into His bosom. How great was the merit of all the apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins and the other servants of God in fulfilling the will of God, and suffering all for Him! And now how great is their glory! How sweet it is also in the present life to suffer for God! A mother who carries her beloved child in her arms, feels, indeed, its burden; but such is her love for him, that the weight is for her no weight. So Mary, though she bore the heavy weight of all the pains and afflictions of her beloved Son, yet seemed as if she had no weight to carry, because her purpose of fulfilling the will of God in all things made light to her even the greatest burdens. The fulfilment of the will of God was the reason why the Blessed Virgin felt always great peace in her soul. Indeed, the following of our own will is the cause of uneasiness, disquiet, perturbation, and affliction, as experience fully proves. On the contrary, the absence of self-will is the source of all good, because a Christian who has no will of his own, wishes nothing particularly, makes no opposition to the will of others, and accepts heartily whatever happens to him as sent by God. This is to live a life without fear or perplexity, but with all security and happiness. This is the way to reach Paradise very easily, as it were in a carriage, because the will of God is the carriage that brings us to Paradise; this is being brought to salvation like a child in his own mother's arms. Of this happy soul it may be said: 'My people shall sit in the beauty of peace and in the tabernacles of confidence, and in wealthy rest' (Isa. xxxii. 18). Such was Mary; the will of God followed constantly by her in everything, on all occasions, and

with the greatest perfection till her death, obtained for her the most sublime seat of glory in Paradise. In conclusion, the will of God must be the rule of all our actions, as it was the rule of all the actions of Mary.

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SECTION IV.

ON THE GIFT OF PRAYER IN MARY, AND HER UNION WITH GOD.

PRAYER is twofold, vocal and mental: *vocal* prayer consists in raising our voice and heart to implore God's graces; *mental* prayer consists in the contemplation of the truths of religion. In mental prayer, as St. Augustine says, we must pray rather than speak—more groans and tears than discourses. The utility of each is the same, the necessity different, since vocal prayer is more necessary than mental. The Blessed Virgin had the gift both of vocal and mental prayer, so that by the use of prayer her union with God became daily strengthened and perfect. Now, in the example of Mary is to be considered the necessity, the efficacy and the conditions of a good prayer.

I. In the first place, prayer is *necessary*, and this for two reasons: first, because God commands it; secondly, because our own good requires it. First, *God commands it*. God loves us, as our Saviour assures us in the Gospel (John xvi. 27): 'The Father Himself loveth you.' In loving us, God is disposed to grant us His favours; but if we wish to obtain them, we must ask them of Him. 'Ask, and it shall be given you' (Matt. vii. 7); and (Luke xviii. 1), 'Pray, and not faint.' 'Yes,' says St. Augustine, 'God is ready to grant his graces; but according to the plan of His ordinary providence, He has determined to grant them only to those who ask. First, let our fervent prayer ascend to heaven (continues the same holy father), and thence the divine mercy will abundantly descend.' St. James the Apostle says (i. 5): 'If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all abundantly, and upbraideth not.' Moreover it was to show us the obligation we are under of praying, that our Lord

Jesus Christ chose to set us the example of prayer, as St. Cyprian remarks (de Orat. Dom.), saying, ‘Our Saviour not only by words, but also by deeds, taught us the necessity of praying, as He frequently prayed. Indeed, if He prayed who had no sin, how much more ought sinners to pray! And if He all the night continued watchful in prayer, how much more must we vigilant, and frequently pray in the night! Our Saviour prayed and entreated not for Himself (for how could the Innocent need prayer?), but for our crimes.’ And it is for us a happy necessity to be obliged to have constant recourse to God. ‘What,’ exclaims St. Chrysostom, ‘is sweeter or more delightful than prayer, which leads us to the audience of the great King of the Universe, which raises us from earth to heaven, and mixes us, so to speak, with angels and saints, and to converse with God?’ Great honour it is for a poor and obscure subject to be admitted to the audience of his Sovereign; greater honour to be called by this same Sovereign; and greater still to be admitted at all times and at all hours. Such is the honour that God, the Lord of all, vouchsafes to us; such is His condescension towards us; and can we refuse so vast a benefit? What black ingratitude to show ourselves deaf to that voice of love which calls us to His audience! What must we say of those Christians, though we hope few in number, who rise in the morning from their couch without uttering one prayer to God, and who retire at night to rest without having all the day thought of God? What must we say of those who never think of God, never remember God, save perhaps when they utter His holy name in cursing and blasphemy? What shall we say of those who never recite the acts of the theological virtues, nay, who do not even know them, but are utterly ignorant of the first rudiments of Christian doctrine? How grievously do these persons insult the majesty of God, whose command it is that He should be honoured by frequent and well-ordered prayer!

But not only is prayer necessary because God commands it, but also because *our particular good requires it*. The teaching of St. Thomas upon this point is the following. ‘After baptism, man has need to pray continually, in order to

attain salvation ; for though in baptism his sins are remitted, yet there remains within him the foes which attack him from within, while the world and the devils make war upon him from without' (p. 3. q. 39, art. 5). Now if, in order to find salvation, we must fight against temptations and conquer them ; if without the divine grace we cannot do it ; if, to obtain divine assistance the means is prayer ; it follows that without prayer we cannot overcome our spiritual enemies and be saved. The want of prayer in a Christian argues the deficiency of one of the principal obligations of his state. Prayer, according to St. Francis of Sales, dissipates the darkness of intellect, and brings forth the will to the love of God. Moreover, the same Angelic doctor adds (2. 2. q. 83, art. 2), that 'Men by prayer deserve to obtain whatever graces the Lord may have determined from eternity to grant them.' Hence St. Chrysostom observes (tom i. Hom. lxxvii.): 'As moisture is necessary to plants, that they may live, and not wither ; so prayer is necessary to us, that we may be saved.' And elsewhere he adds : 'As the soul gives life to the body, so prayer maintains the soul alive, without which it is dead.' 'As without food,' says St. Augustine, 'the body cannot support life, so without prayer the soul cannot preserve its vitality.' As without the aid of grace we can do no good, cannot begin to do good, nor even have the wish to do so, as the apostle tells us ; so this aid of grace the Lord does not grant in the ordinary course of Providence save to those who pray. Moreover, the holy fathers teach that to adults prayer is requisite, not only by *necessity of precept*, but of *means* also—that is, that in the ordinary course of Providence a Christian cannot be saved without seeking of God the graces necessary to salvation. No man can overcome strong temptations without grace, and grace is given by prayer. Particularly, according to the remark of St. Alfonso di Liguori, no one can resist the impure temptations of the flesh unless he recommends himself to God when tempted. This enemy is so terrible that, when it attacks us, it takes from us, as it were, the clear light of the verities of faith, makes us forget all good maxims, all past resolutions, and blinds us to all fear of the divine chastisements. Hence



he who does not then have recourse to God is lost. Hence the wise man in the Book of Wisdom says : ' I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave me power : I went to the Lord and besought Him ' (Wisd. viii. 21).

Some one may say that he has no need of prayer, on the ground of his being in a state of grace, and not likely to lose it. Such a person should remember what St. Paul says, that man does not know if he is an object of complacency or aversion to the eye of God. Besides, though one should be at present in the grace of God, may he not in one moment lose it, and from a saint become a devil? Great trees require a century to grow; nevertheless, in less than an hour they may be cut down and rooted out. Might not a strong temptation, a more perilous contingency, a more seducing object, an unguarded moment, cause a great saint to fall? Above all, does not a Christian know that, to gain Paradise, final perseverance is necessary? Who, then, has assured him of his persevering in good until death? Perseverance is a grace which is not due to anyone, however rich in virtue and merit before God. This is so exclusive a gift that it cannot be obtained save through prayer, as St. Augustine observes : ' Where merit fails, prayer succeeds; then you must constantly pray if you wish to obtain this grace. If you pray, may you hope to be among the number of those who are chosen for glory.' Therefore, whatever we are, whether just or sinners, we are under the obligation and necessity of praying, in order that we may not risk our everlasting salvation. What remorse would be ours throughout eternity if, from neglecting prayer, we should fall into perdition !

Mary, who knew well the necessity of prayer, treasured each moment as an occasion for praying. In order not to be distracted by other business, and to be more united with God, she left her father's house, and shut herself up in a retired part of the Temple, as in a monastery, with other virgins serving in the Temple, attending to prayer and the practice of virtue. They had a chapel near the altar when attending to prayer, while the divine offices were being celebrated. Allusion is made to this college of virgins in the Second Book of Maccabees (chap. iii. v. 19), where it is related that during

the persecution, there went to Onias the virgins who lived in the enclosure. 'And the virgins also that were shut up, came forth.' According to tradition, the Blessed Virgin, after devoting one portion of the night to sleep and the necessary repose of the body, passed the remainder in prayer and the contemplation of divine things. At daybreak, till the hour of tierce, she assisted at the divine offices of the Temple. After this, she attended to manual labour, by spinning or weaving wool, linen and silk, for the wants of the Church. At vesper time she attended to the lesson of the Divine Scripture. When free from other necessary occupations, she used to remain in the said chapel adoring, praising, and glorifying God, with the greatest reverence. Through prayer and meditation upon the attributes of God, she felt herself more and more inflamed with divine love, and desired vehemently to unite herself to Him. Nor did she cease from prayer and contemplation when attending to work, as she had always God before her eyes, and adored everywhere His Divine Majesty. Nay, her short sleep was often interrupted by pious thoughts, calling to her memory her loving God, and His benefits to her. Whilst her body was sleeping, her soul was awake, meditating on what she had before read and contemplated, so that her slumber was mixed with sweet talking with God. As intercourse with others, when unnecessary, causes distraction, and diverts our minds from God, so the Blessed Virgin prudently avoided all occasions of converse with her fellow-virgins, save when the glory of God and the exercise of charity or other virtues required it, and spent her time conversing only with God. Thus Mary passed the years of her sojourn in the Temple. Nor did she omit, as far as circumstances allowed, to continue her exercises of piety and devotion when she quitted by obedience the house of virgins to be married to St. Joseph. Nay, they became more and more fervent after the Incarnation of the Son of God, as then both her interior and exterior reverence towards His Divine Majesty greatly increased, and her readiness to fulfil His divine will, and to perform all that belonged to the service of God, was the more admirable, and her prayers, contemplations, and celestial visions became

more noble and sublime. Her most ordinary occupation was, in progress of time, the contemplation of the great mysteries of Redemption, which were being accomplished before her eyes—the bearing of her God Himself in her womb, His Nativity, His Life, His Passion, His Resurrection, and His Ascension into heaven, the coming of the Holy Ghost, the establishment of the Church, and, lastly, the salvation of mankind. St. Luke (ii. 19) says : ‘ Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.’ He says *kept all*, that is, she kept all the mysteries of the Incarnate Word in her heart, meditating on them, comparing them with the prophecies of the Old Testament, considering the analogy of the two Testaments, admiring their congruity and harmony, and considering how well the figures of the former had corresponded with the fact. She considered the height and majesty of these mysteries, and the infinite bounty, wisdom, and love of God, which shone throughout them. Nor did she contemplate only the mysteries, but the very words, actions, and circumstances relating to them. Nor was she content with seeing what happened before her eyes, or with reading the Scriptures, but, moreover, she was anxious to hear from the very lips of her beloved Son words of eternal life, and these formed the dearest subject of her continual contemplation.

II. But if every Christian may learn of Mary the necessity of prayer, from Mary also all may see its *efficacy*, which is founded, first, on the promises of God, and, secondly, on the evidence of facts. In the first place, the efficacy of prayer is founded *on the promises of God*. God has promised that he who asks shall obtain grace, that is, that grace depends on prayer. We read in Jeremiah (xxxiii. 3), ‘ Cry to me, and I will hear thee ;’ and in the Psalms (xc. 15), ‘ He shall cry to me, and I will hear him ;’ and in St. Luke (xi. 10), ‘ Everyone that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.’ In St. Mark (xi. 24), Jesus Christ says : ‘ I say unto you, all things whatsoever you ask, when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you : if you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it to you ;’ and (Matt. vii. 17), ‘ Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and

you shall find.' And (Matt. xi. 28) He says : 'Come to me all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you;' and St. James (iv. 2) says : 'If you have not sufficient strength, why do you not ask it? You have it not because you ask it not.' By prayer even the most wretched sinners may obtain the mercy of God, as we are assured by God Himself (Isaias l. 18) : 'Come and accuse Me, saith the Lord : if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow.' Now, after promises so clear and positive, who can doubt the efficacy of prayer? Sooner shall heaven and earth pass away than the words of God fail. Theodoretus tells us that prayer 'is omnipotent for obtaining all things.' St. Gregory of Nyssa says : 'Prayer is the safeguard of chastity.' St. Augustine says : 'He knows how to live well, who knows how to pray well.' St. John Chrysostom says (in Psal. xvii. 4) : 'Prayer is a saving weapon to overcome every assault of the demons, a defence that preserves us from every danger, a harbour that will save us in every tempest, a treasure that provides us with every good.' We, then, through divine infallible promises, relying on the love that God the Father has towards us, and encouraged by the solemn word of His Son, are sure of obtaining from our Lord every grace that we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, necessary to salvation.

In the second place, the efficacy of prayer is founded on *the evidence of facts*. In all ages our Lord has heard those who had recourse to Him in prayer, as we have examples without number in the Holy Scriptures. Moses prayed, and his prayer divided the waters of the Red Sea for the saving of the Hebrew nation. Joshua prayed, and his prayer suspended the course of the day. Eliezer prayed, and his prayer availed for the discovery of Rebecca the future bride of Isaac. Isaac prayed, and through his prayer his barren consort became fruitful. Rachel prayed, and obtained the son she desired, and became the mother of Joseph. Anna prayed, and her prayer had the desired blessing, and she became mother of the prophet Samuel. Judith prayed, and her prayer obtained at once the destruction of the enemy of the people of God, and the safety of her country. David prayed in his

adversities, and prayer obtained for him resignation, patience, and repose. He says (Psalm xvi. 6): 'I have cried to Thee, for Thou, O God, hast heard me.' Solomon desired the wisdom of God, and obtained it (Wisdom vii. 7): 'I called,' he says, 'on the Lord, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me.' Hezekiah prayed, and by his prayer, most valorous captain that he was, broke the lines of the hostile encampment, and bore through them desolation and death. Josaphat and Asa prayed, and their prayer obtained a complete victory over their numberless foes. Behold Jonah, who, having been cast into the sea, by prayer was saved. Look upon the three innocent children in the furnace of Babylon, who by prayer were unhurt by the flames, and rather refreshed by a grateful breeze. Behold Susan, though innocently condemned to death, prayed to God, and God sent Daniel, through whom her innocence was discovered and her perfidious accusers condemned. Daniel also, in the lions' den, prays, and remains unhurt. Esther, overwhelmed with grief at seeing the impending extermination of her people, prays, and her prayer softens the heart of Assuerus, and obtains both the salvation of her people and the punishment of the enemy of her nation. But we should never cease were we to enumerate all the facts which show how the Lord has ever heard the prayer of those who have had recourse to Him.

However, some may say, it is true that the Lord has heard the prayers of such as have applied to Him; but these were good men who merited graces, and then they obtained them. But the case is different with regard to sinners, who are unworthy of all grace, and consequently can have no hope of God hearing them. In order to answer this objection, we will treat of sinners who by prayer have obtained the favours they asked. Look at Nabuchodonosor: he was a wicked man, an enemy of God's prophets, and a persecutor of the righteous. The vengeance of God followed him, and after having been humbled, he prayed to the Lord, and God being appeased, he was restored to his kingdom. Look at Nineveh. That sinful city had provoked the anger of God, and a prophet threatened it with utter extermination. But Nineveh seeks for pardon, laments before the Lord, prays for mercy, and

obtains it. The woman of Samaria was an adulteress, and nevertheless found the mercy of our Lord. Cornelius, a Gentile, prays, and his prayer, rising to heaven, obtains for him the light of the Gospel. It is therefore evident that God listens to the prayer not only of the just but also of sinners, and even of those who are without the pale of His Church; and therefore prayer is efficacious for all.

But if this is the case, why are there so many complaining that they cannot obtain the graces they ask for? We answer, in the first place, that some do not obtain temporal goods and favours, because what they ask may often be pernicious rather than useful to them, so that the refusal of them is often the greatest favour that God can bestow. To be rich was not a fortune for Dives, but a true misfortune, because, having made a bad use of the riches—spending money in eating, drinking, and living wantonly—his soul was buried in hell. But speaking also of spiritual graces, there are among them some which are not equally expedient for all; for some they may be expedient, for others not so; and God, who well knows what is best for us, does not then grant them. St. Paul prayed the Lord to free him from the temptation of Satan (2 Cor. xii. 7): ‘There was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me.’ He proceeds to pray: ‘For which thing thrice I besought the Lord that it might depart from me.’ But the Lord did not grant his prayer, because He saw that for the perfection of virtue St. Paul had need of that tribulation. ‘He said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee, for virtue is made perfect in infirmity;’ that is, by resisting vigorously the temptation, virtue increases and becomes perfect. When, therefore, we ask for temporal favours, and also for certain spiritual ones, we ought to ask for them as far as it may contribute to our salvation and sanctification; then, if we do not receive such graces, it is a sign that they are not expedient for us. Moreover, as we do not know if it is pleasing to God to grant a grace at once, or at some future time, so we must ask for graces with all diffidence and resignation, waiting patiently the divine will. However, as prayer must have some good effects, if God does not grant us the grace we ask,

He will grant some other benefit that we did not ask, but which will be more useful to us.

III. Still, some one will say, I ask of God spiritual graces necessary for my salvation, and with all my praying I have got none; I am just as subject to anger, vanity, ambition, and other passions, as hitherto. Your prayer, we answer, although it be legitimate in its object, has not the characteristics necessary to obtain grace, and for this reason prayer becomes ineffective. Now the characteristics or conditions that prayer must have, in order to obtain its object, are principally three: namely, humility, confidence, perseverance. First, *humility*. When we pray, we must put ourselves in the position of the poor asking alms. 'What are we when we pray?' asks St. Cyprian, 'but a troop of mendicants ranged before the door of a great Father of a family, anxious to receive some help? Then we ought to do just as the poor do, with humble demeanour and with respectful expressions explain to Him our own miseries and wants.' Hence in the Holy Scripture we find that God listens to the prayers of the poor (that is, of the humble), and neglects those of the proud. The Royal Psalmist says (Psa. ci.): 'He hath had regard to the prayers of the humble;' and St. James (iv. 6) says: 'God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.' Assuredly a haughty brow, a proud look, a pharisaical ostentation, cannot obtain grace from a God who openly declares that He abominates the proud, and gives grace only to the humble. The absence of true humility, founded on the firm persuasion of our real spiritual wants, makes us unworthy to be heard. Therefore, to obtain graces, we ought to feel persuaded of the need we have of such grace, though unworthy of having it. Such was the prayer of Solomon (4 Reg. iii.), who, fully persuaded of his nothingness, said to the Lord: 'I am but a child, and know not how to go out and come in. . . . Give to thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people, and discern between good and evil. . . . And the Lord said to Solomon, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life or riches, nor the lives of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself wisdom to discern judgment, behold I have done for thee according to thy

words, and have given thee a wise understanding heart . . . and the things also which thou didst not ask, I have given thee : to wit, riches and glory.' How liberal is God with the humble ! He not only grants him what he asked for, but also what he did not ask. Now, if God was so liberal with Solomon on account of his humility, how much greater must have been His liberality towards Mary, the Mother of humility ? It was indeed on account of her praying with humility that Mary obtained so many graces from God, and specially it was her humility, as has been already observed, that made her capable of the greatest grace a mere creature could obtain, namely, to become the Mother of God.

In the second place, we must pray with *faith*. When praying, we must rest assured that prayer opens the treasures of divine mercy, and so we must exclude all doubts from our mind. Indeed we do not go to pray to a stranger, with whom we have no relation or tie ; but we pray to our own Creator, our Redeemer, our Father, and one who loves us dearly. How great, then, should be our confidence in being heard by Him. If we are not heard, we must attribute it to our praying with languor and coldness, which indicates absence of faith and hope in God. How often do we pray as if not desiring any grace. St. Augustine relates of himself that he often prayed Almighty God to cure him of the wounds of that unbridled lust which tyrannised over him, but that his heart did not follow his words ; that in the act of praying to be heard, he feared he should be heard, or at least to be heard too soon, to be delivered from those infirmities, which were, alas ! agreeable to him. Thus it happens to many Christians, that they pray with their lips, while their hearts agree not with their tongues. If we wish for grace, the heart must be the mover of the tongue, so that we ought to feel confident, and persuaded that the Lord will certainly hear us. While Mary, through humility, was persuaded that she deserved not to be heard by God, at the same time she was full of confidence that God in His infinite mercy would grant her prayers, and her faith, indeed, was not disappointed. St. James of Sarug (Carm. i. p. 225) tells us that Mary was visited by Gabriel when she



was praying before God with great confidence and love: 'Mary,' he says, 'received this spiritual revelation (the mystery of incarnation) when she was praying in sincerity and simplicity, as she, being holy, stood full of admiration before God, and poured out her heart before Him with love.'

In the third place, prayer must be *persevering*. Our Lord has promised us graces, but He has not told us that He would grant them at a first, a second, or a third prayer. He knows well the proper time, and for His inscrutable but always loving ends, occasionally defers giving what He nevertheless intends to grant. Hence we ought not to be weary in praying, but we must persevere in asking. When Jacob had to meet Esau, being fearful of some sinister dealing, he retired alone to implore in prayer the help of God. An angel in human form appeared to him, and Jacob, taking him by the hand, prayed him to remain with him, and protect him in that extremity. The angel struggled to disengage himself, but Jacob employed more force to detain him; the angel, who intended to be overcome, opposed in such a manner that the hand of Jacob prevailed. The angel struck Jacob on one leg, so that the pain made him shrink; but this did not stop him from fighting. He then told Jacob that it was time for him to go and attend to his own affairs, to put his people on their march, for the day was advancing; but in vain, for Jacob still held the angel fast by the hand. The angel, who was pleased to see in Jacob that great constancy, finally blessed him as Jacob desired, promised him his assistance, encouraged him to hope for good, and the event showed the protection of the Lord. A Christian must persevere like Jacob in doing violence, and he will obtain infallibly the graces necessary for his salvation and sanctification. It has been already observed that Mary was continually praying with that perseverance which obtains graces. From the Acts of the Apostles we are aware that after the ascension of our Saviour to heaven, His mother was with the apostles persevering in prayer.

An example of humble, fervent, and constant prayer is seen in the Gospel history. A woman of Canaan coming forth

from the utmost limits of her unbelieving country, went to Jesus Christ, in order to obtain the cure of her daughter who was possessed by a devil. On meeting Jesus she prostrates herself on the earth, and adores the Divine Master, and begs Him to have mercy on her. Here is the humility necessary in prayer. Repulsed as one unclean, she neither shows resentment, nor defends herself; she bears all, and replies that dogs even eat the remnants of their lord's table, and she is confident of receiving the favour. Here is her faith. She receives a repulse, and is almost driven away, but ceases not to pray and persevere in her demand. The more she was repulsed, the more she cried for grace, till at length she merited to hear from our Lord the consoling words (Matt. xv. 28), 'O woman, great is thy faith: be it done to thee as thou wilt.' And her daughter was cured from that hour.

Those without the Church Catholic must particularly pray to God that they may find out the truth, as, according to theology, man without a special helping of inward grace is unable to have either faith or the beginning of it. Cornelius, as we read in the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, had the grace to know the true religion, and to be received into the Church by humble, fervent, and constant prayer. The history runs thus: 'There was a certain man in Cæsarea, named Cornelius, a centurion. . . . a religious man, and fearing God, with all his house, giving much alms to the people, and always praying to God. This man saw in a vision manifestly an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Thy prayers and thy alms are ascended for a memorial in the sight of God; and now send men to Joppa, and call hither one Simon, who is surnamed Peter. . . . he will tell thee what thou must do. And when the angel was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a soldier who feared the Lord . . . and he sent them to Joppa; and on the next day whilst they were going on their journey, Peter went up to the higher parts of the house, to pray, about the sixth hour. . . . There came upon him an ecstasy of mind, and he saw the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great linen sheet let down by the four corners from heaven to the earth, wherein were all manner of four-footed

beasts, and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him: Arise, Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said, Far be it from me, for I never did eat anything that is common and unclean. And the voice spoke to him again: That which God hath cleansed do not thou call common. And this was done thrice, and presently the vessel was taken up into heaven. Now whilst Peter was doubting within himself what the vision should mean, behold the men who were sent from Cornelius, inquiring for Simon's house, stood at the gate. And as Peter was thinking of the vision, the Spirit said to him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise, therefore, get thee down and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them. Then Peter going down to the men said; Behold I am he whom you seek, what is the cause for which you are come? Who said, Cornelius, a centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and having good testimony from all the nation of the Jews, received an answer of a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. Then bringing them in, he lodged them, and the day following he arose and went with them. And the morrow after he entered into Cæsarea. . . . Cornelius came to meet him, and falling at his feet adored him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, Arise, I myself also am a man; and talking with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. . . . Cornelius said, Four days ago, unto this hour, I was praying in my house, at the ninth hour, and behold a man stood before me in white apparel, and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thy alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God; send, therefore, to Joppa, and call hither Simon, who is surnamed Peter. Immediately, therefore, I sent to thee, and thou hast done well in coming. Now all we are present in thy sight to hear all things whatsoever are commanded thee by the Lord. And Peter said, In very deed I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh justice, is acceptable to Him.' Then Peter taught him and the rest the truths of the Christian religion, and while Peter was giving instructions, the Holy Ghost descended, and Cornelius was baptized with the others. Now, we ask, could not the Holy

Ghost descend before the instructions were given by St. Peter? Could He not descend also before the coming of St. Peter? Assuredly the Holy Ghost could do it; but why did He not do it? It was to teach all those outside the Church that the means to know and embrace the true religion are *prayer* to God, and receiving *instruction* from the ministers of the Catholic Church; the one is as necessary as the other, and when both are joined, the descent of the Holy Ghost will not fail, and the conversion is insured. But how can it be said that a Protestant wishes to embrace the true faith, if he refuses to pray and submit his doubts to a Catholic priest? To refuse the means to know the truth, is the same as to refuse openly to be a Catholic. Persons of this description will have no excuse before the tribunal of God. On the other hand, everyone is obliged, both by natural and divine law, to embrace the true religion of God, and to profess it not only in the interior of his heart, but also exteriorly in that Church which by its Founder has been endowed with such marks and signs as make it distinguished above any other religious sect as the true Church of God. Any Protestant who has received even the commonest instruction must have some knowledge of the Catholic religion, and conceive a certain possibility of its truth, though he may think that his sect also may be good. He, finding himself in this state, cannot dwell in peace, and say, I do not care about Catholicism, I am content with my religion; he is obliged to inquire and see if his religion is as good as the Catholic, and whether the Catholic religion has not more striking and evident marks to show that it is the only true one. To this effect he is obliged to pray, and to be instructed by a person competent to teach him the grounds of Catholic faith. If he declines to do so, then he rejects the means afforded him by God of knowing the truth, and he cannot plead excuse for remaining out of the way of salvation.

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## SECTION V.

## ON MARY'S LOVE TOWARDS HER NEIGHBOUR.

THE precept of the love of our neighbour, as well as the practice of it, is taught us by the God of love. Love, He says, thy neighbour as thyself, with a hearty, disinterested, sincere, effective and affectionate love. Feed him when hungry, visit him when he is sick, instruct him if ignorant, console him when afflicted, advise and direct him when he is doubtful, bear with him patiently if wearisome, pardon him from your heart for any offence he may have done to thee, and pray to God for him. And all this you are to practise not only to your coreligionists, but also towards the schismatic, the infidel, the idolater; as all are thy neighbours, all created to my image, all my creatures, equally loved by me, redeemed with my blood, and destined to the same glory to which you are called, if they subject themselves to Me, and observe my precepts. This is my commandment: you must love one another, as I have loved you. I loved you only for your interest and advantage, not for my own gratification or profit; nay, to my great pain and sorrow, even to give you my life. Whosoever will go so far as to give up his life actually, or at least with his good will and desire for his neighbour, shall show the greatest sign of charity towards him. Such was the charity of Mary towards her neighbour, as we shall now explain.

The fifteen offices of Christian charity, as described by St. Paul (1 Cor. xiii.), were the characteristics of Mary's charity. *Charity is patient*, and the charity of Mary was so patient as to be a perfect imitation of the patience of her Divine Son. Although she found herself in the most difficult circumstances of life—poverty, contempt, fatigue of long journeys, persecutions, and every sort of affront—she nevertheless never gave the least sign of perturbation or disgust. *Charity is kind*: and Mary was so kind, benign, affable, full of bounty towards all, disposed to oblige all, and this without any interest of her own, not through carnal affection, but with

the most pure and sincere love, like that of Jesus Christ, loving equally all without distinction, even the enemies of her Divine Son. *Charity envieth not.* Mary did not envy others in prosperity; she felt pain and affliction for their sorrows, and felt joy at seeing their happiness. *Charity dealeth not perversely.* Mary, in dealing with others, was not influenced by any motive that was not in accordance with what was right, but acted always with the most pure and charitable intentions. *Charity is not puffed up.* Mary was too humble and too fully persuaded of her nothingness to be ever puffed up. Her dignity as Mother of God, with all corresponding endowments of the most rare description, was for her but a motive for her greater humiliation. *Charity is not ambitious.* The Blessed Virgin had no other ambition than that of doing all the good she could towards her neighbour, and of remaining hidden before the eyes of men. Indeed, never is it found in the Holy Scripture that Mary unnecessarily put herself forward, or had any desire of domineering over others; on the contrary, we find that she loved always to be considered as the poor handmaid of the Lord. *Charity seeketh not her own.* Mary did not look for money, for friendship, for the favours of persons in high station and power, but only for the good of souls, for their conversion, for the destruction of the kingdom of the devil, and the establishment of the kingdom of her Divine Son. If we may trust to certain ancient writers, all the gifts brought by the Magi to Jesus Christ were distributed by Mary among the poor. *Charity is not provoked to anger.* Mary was the true mirror of the meekness of Jesus Christ, and she put into practice what her Divine Jesus said (Matt. xi. 29): 'Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.' Though she saw her beloved Son so cruelly treated by the Jews, and felt a just indignation against them, nevertheless, neither exteriorly or interiorly was she angry against anyone, but offered, together with her Divine Son, to the heavenly Father, a common sacrifice of resignation and peace. *Charity thinketh no evil.* True charity not only brings the Christian to bear injuries with patience, but persuades him also to think and judge that there is no malice on the part of

those who are the cause of the mischief, and consequently makes the person who receives the injury think no evil of others. So our Blessed Lady never thought ill of the persecutors of her Divine Son and of herself, but charitably excused them, and saw in them the instruments of the will of God. *Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity.* He who loves God cannot rejoice in iniquity, that is, in the works of sin, because iniquity offends the sovereign goodness which is of God. Hence the Blessed Virgin was extremely sorrowful for the iniquities committed by the Jews and other offenders of her Divine Son, and offered satisfaction to God for the expiation of their sins. *Charity rejoiceth with the truth.* A true friend rejoices in the honour, esteem, and good fortune of his friend, and considers them as his own. Mary, therefore, while she felt affliction when evil was done, rejoiced when the divinity of her Son was acknowledged during His life, and after His ascension to heaven, when the conversion of so many people and the propagation of Christianity was so happily brought to pass. *Charity beareth all things.* To do good, and be a true instrument of the glory of God and salvation of souls, it is necessary to possess Christian fortitude; and with this to confront, resist, and overcome all oppositions and difficulties that the works of God naturally meet in their way. Mary was called to be the instrument of great things, and thus to meet, like her beloved Son, with great opposition, which she bravely bore, and overcame to the great advantage of religion and of souls. *Charity believeth all things.* A simple and well-disposed heart believes of his neighbour all possible good; and so Mary, who was as simple as a dove, acted towards others, and treated others as if all were good, or at least likely to become so. *Charity hopeth all things.* Mary hoped for the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ, the conversion of the Jews and Gentiles, the propagation of faith throughout the world, and the salvation of all souls. To this end she laboured to the utmost of her power, and before her death she had the happiness of seeing the Christian religion already propagated throughout all the world. Finally, her *charity endured all things*, rather than fail in the work in behalf of the spiritual and temporal welfare

of her neighbour. Such was Mary, who, having always before her eyes the infinite charity of her Divine Son, and always persevering in her determination of imitating it, suffered every contradiction, and endured every fatigue, during her whole life, to give glory to God and secure the salvation of souls.

As the preaching of the Gospel is an office given only to the apostles, and their successors in the apostolate, and no woman, however distinguished in learning and sanctity, is allowed to preach in the Church of Christ, so Mary abstained from preaching the Gospel. However, as there are many other means of promoting the salvation of souls, which may be usefully employed by all, so Mary occupied herself privately in works of Christian charity, by giving advice to those that asked it from her, by teaching the ignorant the doctrine of Jesus Christ, admonishing sinners for their conversion, consoling the afflicted, and praying for all, especially for such as were out of Christianity. Great is the merit of those who bring souls to God, as appears from the reward promised to them. St. James says: 'He that causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sin.' And in Daniel (xii. 3) we read: 'They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity.' Moreover, as there is another manner of preaching which is even more eloquent and effectual than preaching by word of mouth, and which is practicable to all—namely, is essentially required to be done by all Christians—namely, to give good example to others, so Mary was the best preacher in this way, preaching by her saintly life in so perfect a manner as to be considered, from the appearance of her person, and the sanctity of her acts, to be not merely a simple creature, but something approaching divine. This kind of preaching particularly belongs to the fathers and mothers of families, as well as to all who are placed in authority over others. These indeed will have to give a strict account to God at the hour of death of the example they give to their children and those depending on them, so that if through their bad example the same be scandalized, and through their negli-

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gence do not attend to their religious duties, God will require their souls at their hands.

As to pardon the injuries we receive from our neighbours is one of the principal duties of Christianity, so words cannot express how perfectly Mary complied with this precept by heartily forgiving all injuries done to her—nay, even doing good to her enemies and praying for them. While our Blessed Saviour on the cross was praying to His heavenly Father for the pardon of His enemies, Mary, at the side of the cross, having the same charitable feelings, joined in the same prayer, and would, if necessary, have willingly united also the sacrifice of her life to the sacrifice of the life of her Divine Son, for the pardon and salvation of their common enemies. To pardon injuries indeed is a precept, and one of the most beautiful and useful precepts of the new dispensation. Jesus Christ says (Luke v. 35): ‘Love your enemies, do good and lend, hoping for nothing thereby; and your reward shall be great.’ More striking and urgent is the following passage of the Gospel of St. Matthew (v. 44): ‘I say unto you, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.’ From the text quoted it appears that Jesus Christ commands us to love our enemies in heart, word, and deed. In saying, ‘Love your enemies,’ He commands us to love our enemies with *our heart*. In saying, ‘Pray for them that persecute you,’ He commands us to love them *by word*. In saying, ‘Do good to them that hate you,’ He commands us to love our enemies *in deed*. Therefore, Jesus Christ commands, first, that we should not only not hate our enemy, but, still more, that we should love him with an interior and sincere love; secondly, that we should not deny him the exterior signs of common benevolence; thirdly, that we should succour him in his necessity as we help others in the same position. This we must do by obligation. There are, besides, other things done through love of Christian perfection, as St. Paul teaches us (Rom. xii. 21): ‘Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.’ And our Blessed Saviour exhorts us to be charitable towards our enemies, on the ground that thereby we

shall imitate the charity of God, saying (Matt. v. 45): 'That you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and unjust.' For such is the heart of God, that notwithstanding the many offences committed against Him on the part of man, He does not refuse His general benefits to His enemies, but prevents them even with His grace and gives them temporal benefits, calling them thereby to reconciliation. There is nothing which can better show the greatness and generosity of the human heart, than to pardon our enemies. The same Divine Redeemer adds (verses 46, 47): 'For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans do this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not also the heathens do this?' By these words our Blessed Saviour says, that to love those that love us is not a supernatural thing worthy of merit, as the same is naturally done by the publicans, who were considered by the Jews as infamous men; and that likewise to salute only those who are loved by us through kindred or friendship, is done even by the pagans without any merit. Therefore, to do a meritorious action, it is necessary not only to love those who love us, but to love and salute likewise our enemies, to whom we feel no natural inclination, and from whom we have nothing to hope. Lastly, our Blessed Saviour concludes (ver. 48): 'Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect;' and by it we are solicited to imitate the perfection of our heavenly Father, who exhibits His love and benignity to all, so that no one is excluded from it.

Such is the precept of Jesus Christ, with which everyone ought to comply. Hence no one who entertains feelings of aversion, hatred, or revenge towards his neighbour, can presume to be a client of Mary. She is Mother of Mercy, and those only who are merciful can belong to the number of her clients. A ready pardon of any injury whatever for the love of God and Mary, is a sure sign of a charitable soul, and a guarantee for obtaining pardon from God for our own sins. Christ says (Matt. v. 7): 'Blessed are the merciful,

for they shall obtain mercy.' And on the other hand He says (Jas. ii. 13): 'Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy.' In conclusion, as every description of charity, spiritual and corporal, compatible with her state, was exhibited by Mary towards her neighbour, so any exercise of the same charitable works, done to please her, will be very acceptable to her, and worthy of a particular reward from God, who declares (Matt. xxv. 40): 'Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me.'

## CHAPTER V.

## ON THE IMITATION OF THE PRUDENCE OF MARY.

A PERFECT sanctity requires the exercise of all theological as well as moral or evangelical and cardinal virtues. Having already seen in the preceding chapters how Mary exhibited the perfect model and type of the theological virtues, let us pass in the present to see how she was perfect in the first of the moral or cardinal virtues, viz. that of *prudence*. This is a virtue of the intellect which shows what is to be done, or not done, in every particular case or action, according to the principles of reason and faith. Prudence is the governess and guide of all other virtues, the moderatrix of human affections, and the mistress of morals; so that without prudence a virtue becomes a vice. In the first place, prudence requires that man should have in every undertaking rectitude of intention, and should act for the end of the glory of God, of his own salvation, and the good of his neighbour. Mary possessed habitually such a rectitude of intention, so that she never acted by caprice or passion, but always according to the requirement of the glory of God, her own sanctification, and the good of souls. There was in her a total stripping off of her own will, and a perfect subjection of her spirit to God, her body to the spirit, and her passions to reason. Mary was simple and sincere; what she spoke with the mouth was but the pure and naked manifestation of what she entertained in her heart, and with the same sincerity she spoke to all persons equally without distinction. All artifice, subterfuge, and cunning were an abomination to her. Her conversation was wise, prudential, and edifying, as well as sober and moderate; nor did she speak without necessity or utility. Idleness being an occasion of sin, Mary hated it

like sin, and therefore she did not lose a moment in idleness nor in trifling, but all her time was employed for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Mary's prudence appears in her asking Gabriel how she could conceive a son, being a virgin, this she did in order that through the mouth of the angel we might understand this mystery, as it was observed by St. James of Sarug (Carm. i. p. 233), saying: 'It was quite necessary that the angel should be interrogated by Mary, in order that the generation of the Son of God in her should be understood. Mary interrogated him to the end that through the angel we should learn this conception, the history of which is superior to any human reasoning.' She was so prudent that, on account of her prudence, she is called by the Catholic Church 'Virgin most prudent.' What beautiful lessons are these for a Christian to conform his life to that of Mary! It is very painful to think that all human prudence is used by the worldly in their temporal business, for human success, to secure happiness during the few days of this mortal life; while no prudence is exercised by them to provide for the spiritual benefits of their souls, to be eternally happy in heaven! They spend all their time in things which have to pass away as a shadow, and feel a difficulty in spending a moderate portion of time in prayer, in works of piety and charity, in fulfilling their religious obligations, and giving to God what belongs to God. What a disgrace to see Christians daily spending hours and hours in conversations, in play, in the transaction of business and in amusements, and yet to hear them say that they have no time to think of God and their souls! What excuse will they have before the tribunal of God for having wasted so much time given to them by God for the very purpose of employing it for the good of their souls? What a source of eternal remorse will it be to such Christians in hell, when they consider that they could have easily found salvation if they had made a better use of time!

## CHAPTER VI.

## ON THE IMITATION OF THE JUSTICE OF MARY.

## SECTION I.

## ON MARY'S JUSTICE IN GENERAL.

JUSTICE is the second of the cardinal virtues, and consists in a constant and perpetual will to give to all what belongs to them. This virtue, if it relates to the honours and rewards due according to merit, is called *distributive*; and if it regards the value of things due to those to whom they belong, is called *commutative*. Both these species of justice were perfectly exercised by the Virgin Mary. The duties of justice being in relation to God, to ourselves, and to our neighbour, Mary had always a constant will to give to God, to herself, and her neighbour what was due. She returned to God adoration, thanksgiving, gratitude, and love. She gave to herself the care of her soul and body. She cared so much for her soul that she would have died a thousand times rather than offend God and risk her soul; and with regard to her body, she mortified it in a special manner, not, however, to destroy but to preserve it. Lastly, she gave to her neighbour what was due to him—viz. love, good example, and assistance to the needy. In reference to this virtue of Mary, St. James of Sarug (Carm. i. p. 219) says: ‘From the very moment that Mary was capable of distinguishing good from evil, she preserved purity of heart, and directed her thoughts to God. She never declined from justice, nor could any vile or carnal passion bring her to do wrong. From her infancy marks of sanctity appeared in her, and these by her prudence were carefully nourished. Never did

she remove her eyes from God, and accordingly she was illuminated by Him, while at the same time she rejoiced in Him. And as her soul was so pure, so bright, so clean from any spot, that there never appeared another woman like her, so God desired to dwell in her, and to accomplish in her that admirable mystery which is superior to all.' She practised *distributive* justice by honouring or rewarding those who deserved it; and also *commutative* justice, by faithfully giving what was due to others, and fulfilling any promise or obligation she could have had with her neighbour. In ruling her little family and dealing with others, Mary observed justice in the most perfect manner. Such must be the justice of all the faithful. Upon the accomplishment of these duties towards God, ourselves, and our neighbour depends our justification. If we are wilfully deficient even in one precept only, which binds under pain of mortal sin, our salvation is at stake. There are indeed many Christians who show little disposition to observe justice towards their neighbour; they allow themselves to take from him what is not their due; if they cause any damage to him, they decline to give compensation for the evil they have done, or defer, year after year, to make the restitution of things stolen or not lawfully possessed. Let them consider that many through injustice thus walk miserably in the way of perdition.

Those of our brethren who are separated from us in faith would only be doing an act of justice to return to the faith which was first preached to their ancestors and professed by them. It was an act of injustice against God, against the Catholic Church, and against themselves, to abandon that faith which bears all the characteristics of truth in order to embrace a new faith which had not the least mark of divinity—nay, which had all those of error and impiety. Merely to read the history of the Reformation, as given by unprejudiced historians, would be sufficient to call back to the right way the sheep which are now astray in the delusion of error. Some would say that to go back to Catholicity would be to change or depart from the religion of their forefathers; but they are mistaken, as it would be not to

depart from the faith of their ancestors, but to return to the religion of their forefathers which was so unjustly abandoned by their deluded sons. Besides, it is to be observed that Jesus Christ having received from His Eternal Father by inheritance all Gentiles—‘I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance’ (Ps. ii. 8)—and before ascending to heaven having left this same inheritance to His Church, saying to the apostles: ‘Go, teach ye all nations’ (Matt. xxviii. 19)—it follows that to the Catholic Church, as the true Church of Christ, belong all human souls, that there is only in her the principle of life, the divine commission, the universal dominion, so that to convert souls to Catholicism it is not for the Catholic Church to seize what belongs to others, but to vindicate what is her own property.

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## SECTION II.

### MARY'S OBEDIENCE.

AMONG the virtues subordinate to justice, obedience keeps an eminent place, as a virtue most necessary to the domestic, civil, moral, and supernatural life. This, according to St. Thomas (ii. 2, q. 101, art. 2 and 3), is a moral virtue which makes the will ready to execute the will of Him who commands, no matter if such a will be manifested by the mouth or by any other sign which may be sufficient to indicate the intention of the superior. The obedient man becomes victorious over all his spiritual enemies, as the Holy Ghost assures us (Prov. xxi. 28): ‘An obedient man shall speak of victory,’ because he kills that self-will which loves liberty and independence, and is the enemy of God and man. On the other hand, when obedience is deficient, every other virtue in man is defective, because self-will wages a most cruel war against God, and corrupts the very best of our actions. Obedience was in Mary no less perfect than the virtues already mentioned. She subjected herself to the will of her superiors in her intellect, in her will, and in her actions, knowing by the intellect that she had a duty to



fulfil, bending her will to perform this duty, and hastening by her acts to comply with what she thought to be the express, tacit, or presumed command of her superiors. Such obedience in her mind emanated from the spirit of *faith*, because she saw God in the person of her superior, heard God in the voice of her superior, and obeyed God in obeying her superior. Likewise her obedience proceeded from the spirit of *hope*, because she firmly hoped to obtain from God all graces necessary to execute what was commanded, and also expected only from God the reward of her obedience. Finally, her obedience was actuated by the spirit of *charity*, impelling her to obey God as a being most deserving of her obedience on account of His infinite perfections.

And, as far as regards the practice of obedience, Mary was entirely obedient to all her superiors in all things commanded, and in the manner in which they were commanded, according to time, place, and circumstances, as desired by the superior. As she sacrificed entirely her own inclination by fulfilling the just will of others, her sacrifice was *entirely* perfect, inasmuch as in obeying she fulfilled every particular in all that was commanded. It was *indifferent* to her whether she obeyed in one thing or in another; everything being pleasing to her, because received in the spirit of obedience. She was *prompt* in her obedience, obeying immediately and without delay. Her obedience was *blind*, not stopping to reason on the nature of the command, whether opportune or inopportune, whether reasonable or not so, whether dictated by passion or otherwise; it was *simple*, since she obeyed without calculating the difficulties of the execution of the command, putting all her trust in God for the fulfilment of her obligations; it was *humble* and *respectful*, because, by obeying a superior duly authorised to impose a command, she obeyed him as God, who has all right to command and to be obeyed; it was *cordial* and *affectionate*, because she executed what was commanded, not with dissatisfaction or peevishness, but with cheerfulness and joy. Such was the obedience with which Mary obeyed God, the high priest, and other ministers of religion, her parents, the superioress of the house of the virgins, her spouse St. Joseph, her

temporal sovereign though a pagan, and all who possessed an authority over her. It was immaterial to her whether she received orders to remain in her own country, or to go abroad; to be amongst the people of God, or amongst pagans; as likewise in obeying, she never made a distinction between what was easy or what was difficult in the execution; between what was honourable or what was humiliating. She also submitted herself to such laws as were not binding on her for the sake of precedent and example to others; such as the law of purification, which she observed, though such a law regarded only women who brought forth children in the ordinary way. Mary is therefore the type of true obedience, to be followed by all Christians who desire to fulfil the law of God, and insure their salvation.

## CHAPTER VII.

## ON THE IMITATION OF THE FORTITUDE OF MARY.

*SECTION I.*

## ON MARY'S FORTITUDE AND CONSTANCY OF MIND IN GENERAL.

ACCORDING to St. Thomas, fortitude obtains the third place in the order of cardinal virtues, and by such a virtue a Christian meets willingly all difficulties in order to do good, and suffers all evils rather than desist from his virtuous purpose. Mary possessed that strong and determined soul which overcame all the difficulties she met with in the share she took for the salvation of mankind, and suffered heroically all pains and afflictions which attended her divine maternity. The fortitude of Mary embraced the three degrees proper for this virtue, each of them being stronger and more meritorious than the other.

The first, according to the above Angelic doctor, is perseverance in keeping oneself firm and constant in doing good: thus Mary, from the beginning of her life till the moment of her death, persevered constantly in doing good in different vicissitudes of life allotted to her, as well as in the various difficult circumstances in which she found herself placed. She was always equally perfect in the practice of all theological and moral virtues, in the manner of practising them, in the perseverance in practising them, in the desire and will of practising them to the highest perfection, and in wishing always to effect that which was the most holy and perfect. She indeed acted always according to the extent of the grace given her, and all the strength of her

love. The duty of a Christian is to labour according to the graces given him, so that if he does not make a right use of the talents he has received from God, he will one day hear from the mouth of Jesus Christ that he is condemned as an unprofitable and unfaithful servant.

The second degree of fortitude, which is even greater than the former, according to St. Ambrose, is to mortify all passions, to root out all vices, to despise all pleasures, and exercise with firmness and constancy all virtues. Such was the fortitude of Mary, which she kept perpetually regulated according to the dictates of reason and faith in all the motions of her soul, so that there was in her no disorderly inclination, but all the affections of her soul were perfectly subject to her spirit, thereby exemplifying that she renounced in all things her own will and self-love, as well as all worldly goods, in order to look only to celestial things. The same holy father, speaking of Mary (lib. ii. de Virg.), says: 'She was a virgin not only in her body, but also in her mind: humble of heart, serious in her words, prudent in her thoughts, not fond of talking, persevering in the practice of reading, putting her hope not in the uncertainty of riches, but in the voice of the poor, she occupied herself in working, was modest in her speech and kept a restraint on her mind, which she accustomed to look not to man, but to God only; she injured no one, but loved all, fleeing from vain-glory, she followed reason, and loved virtue.' Every Christian is obliged to subject his evil passions to reason and faith, to keep his body subject to the spirit, and to avoid what may be an obstacle to the practice of virtue and the increase of divine love. In order to succeed in this, he must exercise a firm and constant courage, following the exhortation of the apostle (2 Cor. iv. 10): 'Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.'

The third degree of fortitude is to expose one's own life to danger for the spiritual and temporal good of one's neighbour. As there is nothing so difficult as to give up one's own life for the good of others, so there is no act of fortitude greater than this. Mary did not give up her life for anyone; but,

as some of the fathers observe, she was ready to do so for us, and she would have done so had it been ordained by the will of God. Here are the words of the same St. Ambrose on this point (Lib. de Sanct. Virg. c. vii.): ‘The Mother stood before the cross, and stood intrepid, while men ran away. She looked with pious eyes upon the wounds of her Son, through whom she knew that the redemption of all should be accomplished. The Mother stood affording an original spectacle, as she did not fear to be sacrificed; while the Son was hanging on the cross, the Mother offered herself to the persecutors.’ Every Christian must be ready to make all temporal sacrifices, even that of his own life, rather than offend God Almighty. But what should be said of Christians, who, when some misfortune befalls them, instead of adoring the will of God, and enduring the affliction with Christian fortitude, begin to rebel against God, and curse men. How can they presume to be clients of Mary, if they so offend her beloved Son? They should remember that ingratitude towards the Son pierces the heart of the Mother. Every Christian, therefore, must look at temporal misfortunes with that perfect resignation which Mary manifested in all adverse circumstances of her life.

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## SECTION II.

### ON THE PATIENCE OF MARY.

THOUGH, from what we have said in the preceding section, it may be discovered that great was the patience of the Mother of God, yet we cannot omit speaking particularly of this virtue, it being a *distinct* virtue, as St. Augustine observes, aiming to moderate the grief which is produced by present evils, and to cause Christians to bear them with peace and tranquillity. This virtue, like the others, was possessed in perfection by the Blessed Virgin, as she was never overcome by grief or disappointment at the presence of any evil incident to her, but always entertained the same spirit of calmness and tranquillity. At Bethlehem she is

rejected by all ; in the stable she suffers from the unpleasant odour of the animals and the cold of the season ; in her journey into Egypt she endures all the inconveniences which are inevitable on such occasions, and the more so, because she carries at her breast her dear Child : her life of poverty, in which she was deprived of comforts, and many other painful circumstances of her glorious but painful career, put all her patience to the test. Likewise at the sight of so many unjust persecutions, calumnies, outrages, blows, and scourgings to which her beloved Son was subjected, and at last at His crucifixion and death, as well on account of the unparalleled ingratitude with which her Divine Son was repaid by those who had been most benefited by Him, she had to suffer grievously. Notwithstanding so many motives for losing patience, she never lost her temper, nor made any complaints, but quietly suffered everything, uniting perfectly her will to that of God. Those words of the Gospel, 'There stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother' (John xix. 25), signify that Mary stood calm, patient, and resigned. What a reproach for those who do not like to suffer the least contradiction or pain, so that, at any disappointment they may meet with, they give way to angry feelings, and break peace and harmony with their neighbour. The apostle says (Heb. x. 36) : 'Patience is necessary for you, that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise.' As tribulations are an essential ingredient in Christianity, so every Christian ought to prepare himself to bear tribulations in patience. To wish to be free from tribulations would be the same as to renounce Christianity, to abandon the following of Christ, and to cancel one's own name from the list of the disciples of the Saviour. A Christian therefore wishing to be a disciple of our Divine Redeemer, must be ready to accept from the hand of God all tribulations, and bear them with calmness and tranquillity as the Blessed Virgin did in all the events of her life.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## ON THE IMITATION OF THE TEMPERANCE OF MARY.

TEMPERANCE is the fourth of the cardinal virtues, which renders the sensual appetite subject to faith and reason. According to the apostle St. John, three fountains of concupiscence, or raging pestilence, infect the world—the appetite of carnal pleasures, the appetite of riches, and the appetite of honours. To the first of these appetites our Blessed Lady opposed virginity, chastity, modesty, abstinence, sobriety, and mortification; and we will speak of this in the first and second sections of this chapter. To the second she opposed voluntary poverty, perfect detachment from all worldly possessions, and rejection of the comforts of life; of this we will speak further in the third section. To the third she opposed humility, clemency and meekness; and of this we shall treat in the fourth and fifth sections.

## SECTION I.

## ON THE PURITY AND SPIRIT OF MORTIFICATION OF MARY.

AMONG the moral virtues, chastity, according to St. Augustine (Serm. de Temp. 249), holds an eminent place, because through it we are brought to see God. Indeed Jesus Christ says (Matt. v. 8): ‘Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.’ The pure of body and clean of heart have the happiness to see God in this life through the veil of faith and contemplation, and to behold Him openly face to face in everlasting life, through the intuitive and beatific vision. Conformably to this, St. Thomas says that chastity

leads directly to divine contemplation, that is, it teaches us to look at the divine perfections with a simple and steady glance. Now if Mary was entirely the creature of God, who had no will but that of God, contemplating continually the divine perfections, and living always attached to and absorbed in God, as we have already clearly shown, this solely came to pass because she was the purest creature both in mind and heart, both in body and spirit. Virginity is that blessed and noble state in man or woman, which keeps inviolate the integrity brought from the mother's womb. Such was the state of Mary's whole life. She was a lily ever green and blossoming, ever white and fresh, ever untouched and uninjured, ever exhaling a celestial odour and fragrancy. She so loved this virtue, that she was the first to promise to God by vow to observe chastity perpetually. She so esteemed this virtue as to be willing to renounce even the most high dignity of becoming Mother of God, if to such a dignity she could not unite her professed virginity.

The beautiful virtue of purity is presented to us under different names. It is called *pudicity*, from the word *pudor*, as it is proper for this virtue to feel horror and shame at the bare mention of the vice contrary to it. It is named *continence*, because it draws back and makes the person abstain from sensual motions which are opposed to it. It is termed *chastity*, from *chastising*, as it keeps under control the appetite of concupiscence. It is also styled *integrity*, because its principal endowment is to be without spot or stain. This virtue is so noble, so beautiful, so precious, as to attract the esteem and love of all. It makes a soul noble, rich, and powerful, that is, endowed with celestial nobility, riches and power.

Chastity first *ennobles the body*, because it causes, as it were, the flesh to be spiritualised, and to approach the angelic incorporeity. By guarding the body from carnal pleasures, this virtue succeeds; as it were, in perfuming our flesh, in embalming it, and in clothing it with light, decorum, and brightness to such an extent, that a chaste soul becomes an object of complacency and a sweet spectacle before the eyes of the angels, and particularly before those of his own

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guardian angel. Hence St. Basil had no difficulty in asserting that 'chastity renders man like to God who is a pure Spirit.' St. Augustine calls chastity our body's balm. St. Ambrose calls it the *honour*, the *brightness*, the *light* of the body. If we may believe sworn witnesses, there have been saints, such as St. Philip Neri and St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, who knew persons possessing the virtue of chastity by the fragrance diffused around them at their appearance, and detected the reverse by an offensive smell. Secondly, chastity *makes the soul noble*. Indeed, if it makes the body noble, much more must it ennoble the soul, and hence Jesus Christ says: 'Blessed are those who are clean of heart.' The bending of fallen man to carnal pleasures, makes him, as it were, stupid and morally incapable of perceiving celestial things, as the apostle teaches us (1 Cor. ii. 14): 'The sensual man perceiveth not those things that are of the spirit of God.' Now a pure soul having renounced all gratifications of the flesh, finds itself, as it were, untied and free from the binding of the body, and in the happy state of knowing clearly what is good, how to practise it, and then easily despises temporal pleasures, in order to look for those only that are celestial. St. Augustine relates of himself (in the book of his Confessions), to what nobility his soul was elevated as soon as he abandoned the pleasures of the senses. 'Having at last,' he says, 'triumphed over the passions through the grace of God, and overcome all the difficulties and perplexity which prevented me from abandoning unchaste pleasures, and following the beautiful attractions of chastity, my soul found itself so much raised above the flesh and earthly things, that of my union of soul and body, I thought there remained in me only the soul' ('magis ego sum in mente quam in carne; mens enim regit, caro regitur'). It is granted to chaste souls to sing the new song according to the words of St. John, because they are without spot, and have the privilege of following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. They are the first-fruits of God and of the Lamb (Apoc. xiv. 4). Hence St. Ephrem says: 'Chastity changes a man into an angel;' and St. John Chrysostom says: 'Chastity is an angelic thing, as through it men

become like to the angels.' How noble and beautiful is chastity !

Through the virtue of chastity man in the second place becomes full of *celestial riches*. Let our fancy imagine the great amount of treasures which are contained in the world—in Asia, in Africa, in Europe, in America, in Oceania ; gold, silver, diamonds, precious stones, &c. Place this infinite amount of riches on one side, and on the other let a chaste soul be brought to stand before all this wealth, and it will be at once manifest that such a soul possesses infinitely greater treasure than the possession of all this boundless worldly wealth, so that heaven and earth are not more distant from one another in priceless value than is the latter from the former. It is the Holy Ghost Himself that declares it (Eccles. xxvi. 20) : ' No price is worthy of a continent soul.' Hence St. Augustine calls chastity a fruitful mother of the most beautiful virtues, because, by possessing chastity, one possesses likewise all such virtues as are its indivisible daughters or companions, such as temperance, mortification, prayer, as the avoiding of all dangerous occasions, and keeping a guard over the senses of the body. Pure souls are the beloved of God, and the objects of His complacency. To them He reveals His mysteries, the truths of faith, and makes them partakers of His choicest favours. St. John the Evangelist was loved by Jesus Christ above the other disciples ; it was to him that our Lord revealed particularly His celestial secrets ; to him He gave expressly the care of His Mother, to him it was allowed to repose on the sacred breast of his Lord, and he alone was called the *beloved disciple*. And why all this ? Because, says St. Jerome, the especial prerogative of chastity made him worthy of greater love, for having been called to the apostleship, being still a virgin, he remained a virgin for ever. As the want of chastity was generally the cause of the apostacy and schisms in the children of the church, so the practice of this virtue in those who have gone astray is a beautiful disposition to be enlightened by God in the truths of faith and return to the Church. It must be confessed that unwillingness to change a carnal life for a spiritual one, is the principal

reason of many Protestants remaining out of the way of salvation. If they only would have confidence in the intercession of the Mother of Purity, this obstacle to their conversion would be removed. They, like Augustine, would feel themselves raised above all sensual pleasures, and become true believers, following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

Lastly, *chastity makes us powerful*. The town of Bethulia is besieged by an army of 120,000 foot soldiers and 122,000 horse; it is in a state of extreme destitution; water also is deficient; the Jews can no longer sustain the siege: no alternative remains but to submit to Holofernes or to die. However, Holofernes must die, and Bethulia be liberated. And by whom? By a chaste soul. Judith being so, she is designed by God to be the instrument of this miraculous delivery. Having gone with her servant to the camp of the enemy, she is brought before the general, from whom she obtains leave to go out of the camp in the night to say her prayers. The third night, having entered the pavilion of Holofernes, she kills him, and going out as usual brings away his head, which she exhibits to the citizens. Encouraged at such a sight, they issue from the town, advance against the enemy, disperse them, and return victorious. In conclusion, Holy Writ says (Judith xv. 9-11): 'Joachim, the high priest, came from Jerusalem to Bethulia with all his ancients to see Judith; and when she was come out to him they all blessed her with one voice, saying, Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honour of our people; for thou hast done manfully, and thy heart has been strengthened because *thou hast loved chastity*.' How great is then the power of chastity! Judith was a type of Mary; and if so great was the power of the figure, how far greater must be the power of her who was pre-figured! Indeed, if the chaste Judith killed a man, the Virgin Mary was a powerful instrument of the humiliation of the infernal enemy, and the redemption of all mankind.

Chastity, therefore, being the distinguishing virtue which renders man noble, rich, and powerful, it follows that the

most secure means must be adopted to prevent the loss of this celestial treasure. Prayer is the first means to be employed, as we learn from the Book of Wisdom (viii. 21): 'As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent unless God gave me power, I went to the Lord and besought Him.' Next it is required to fly from the occasions of sin, since, on account of human frailty, it would be akin to a miracle to put oneself in the way of temptation and not to fall into sin. Hence, St. John Chrysostom says: 'The guardian of chastity is flight and retreat.' And St. Augustine likewise admonishes us, saying: 'Against the incitements of lust fly away.' Joseph, the son of Jacob, by a ready flight was victorious over the violent temptation of his mistress. On the contrary, Dina, his sister, having exposed herself to the occasion by going alone about the streets of Sichem, lost her virginity and her honour. Another means of preserving chastity, is the custody of the senses of the body, particularly the mortification of the eyes. Holy Job says (xxxi. 1): 'I made a covenant with my eyes, that I would not so much as look upon a virgin.' Moreover, thinking on death, on sudden death, is also an efficacious means of avoiding sin. St. Augustine relates of himself, that he found no better means to enable him to abstain from the gratification of the flesh than the fear of death. Sobriety in drinking is also a means to keep oneself chaste. To preserve chastity it is also necessary to avoid idleness. 'Idleness,' says the Holy Ghost, 'hath taught much evil' (Eccles. xxxiii. 29). Pride being the cause of impurity, the practice of humility is another most efficient means to preserve chastity. Above all, a powerful means to overcome the temptations of the flesh is true devotion to that Blessed Lady who loved above all things the virtue of purity, and who is very solicitous to assist her clients, in order that they may keep inviolate this beautiful and necessary virtue.

As a lily is safe and untouched when it is surrounded by thorns, so Mary, though confirmed in grace, kept her virginity spotless by an unremitted mortification, both of the interior of her soul and the exterior of her body. She mortified her *memory* by avoiding to call to mind any ideas

pleasing to self-love; her *understanding*, by subduing it in obedience to all revealed things opposed to any opinion of her own; her *will*, by humbly obeying the law of God, and those who held in this world the power of ruling in the place of God, and by readily following the will of God, either positive or negative, in all things. To the mortification of the powers of her soul she united that of the senses of her body. Her *tongue* she mortified by never speaking ill of anyone, but on the contrary by always speaking well of all as far as she could, though enemies of her Divine Son and of herself. Her *hearing* she mortified by closing her ears to detraction, to wicked and worldly talk, and also to those discourses which might redound to her praise. Her sense of *smelling* she likewise mortified by avoiding pleasing perfumes. Her *taste* she also mortified by refraining from savoury food and beverage, and preferring unpalatable victuals and unsavoury drinks. In a word her *feelings* she mortified by forbidding her body whatever could gratify it, and choosing whatever could tend to make it suffer. Here is the beautiful type of Christian mortification which ought to be imitated by all. Mortification in general is a strict precept of God, and the distinctive mark of a Christian. Our Blessed Saviour says (Luke xiii. 8): 'Except you do penance, you shall all perish alike.' St. Paul says likewise (Gal. v. 24): 'They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with its vices and concupiscences.' A Christian must always remember the words of our Saviour (Matt. xi. 12): 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away.' This violence consists in putting into practice Christian mortification, and fighting against our spiritual enemies, both interior and exterior, as the apostle (Gal. v. 17) apprises us: 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another.' And then it is necessary to follow the example of the same apostle by mortifying the body and keeping it in servitude (Cor. ix. 27): 'I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection.' In conclusion, the threatening and dreadful words of Jesus Christ are never to be forgotten (Matt. x. 28): 'He that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me.'

## SECTION II.

## ON THE MODESTY OF MARY.

MODESTY is a part of the virtue of temperance which, according to St. Thomas, ultimately seeks to direct and guide decently and honestly all bodily motions and gestures, and all exterior actions of the members and senses. Hence by this virtue we know how to govern all the operations which are exercised through the faculties of our soul and the members of the body, in order to keep them within the limits of reason, and prevent one member from interfering with the functions of another. By this virtue a Christian is taught how to look, to speak, to sit down, or walk, to move his arms and other parts of the body; and how exteriorly to regulate his behaviour. Such an exterior modesty proceeds from the interior regularity and purity of the soul, so that the Holy Ghost (Eccles. xix. 27) says: 'The attire of the body, the laughter of the teeth, and the gait of the man, show what he is.' Indeed, the modesty, honesty, and gravity of the exterior members of the body show the interior virtue and honesty of the soul, and demonstrate that the perturbations of the soul are conquered and subjected to reason; and also that the heart of man is united to God, as we learn by the same Holy Ghost (Eccles. xvi. 16): 'A man is known by his look, and a wise man when thou meetest him is known by his countenance.' And (Prov. xvii. 24), 'Wisdom shineth in the face of the wise: the eyes of fools are in the ends of the earth.'

Modesty is required in every man and woman, much more in a virgin. Mary, the virgin of virgins, was modesty personified. She had perfectly subjected to reason and to the divine will every movement and gesture of the body, as well as all her actions. She used the most rigorous circumspection about herself by regulating, according to the rules of modesty, all her behaviour. Her speech was very moderate, so that her voice was not clamorous and loud, but low and humble, joined with a gentle face. She knew well the

time of speaking and of being silent. Her words were never vain, proud, offensive, or needless; but always very moderate, prudent, fully considered, soft, courteous, and calculated to foment charity, to promote the glory of God, and the good of her neighbour. St. Epiphanius, according to Nicephorus (Niceph. lib. ii. cap. xxiii.), affirms that the Blessed Virgin was 'very affable, speaking only few words when it was necessary to speak.' Indeed, when Gabriel saluted her as Mother of God she spoke very few words—she asked only if her maternity would be consistent with her virginity; so that on the answer of the angel that her virginity would be preserved, she did not make any further inquiry, but only said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word.' In like manner, when she was told by Simeon of the sword of sorrow that was to pierce her own soul, the vagueness of the prophecy seemed to give room on the part of Mary for some inquiries; yet she asks no question, nor seeks for more light than God was pleased to give her. Here is, indeed, a beautiful example, particularly for women naturally fond of talking. The tongue may be a great instrument of glory to God, as well as of mischief and damage to others. One word alone imprudently said may cause great evil in society. St. James (iii. 10) says: 'Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.' It is, therefore, an absolute necessity for a Christian to mortify his tongue, and imitate the modesty of Mary in speaking. For a woman particularly, the mortification of the tongue is a good sign of perfection, as her tongue is one of her most dangerous enemies, against which she must carefully watch and combat on all occasions. The Holy Ghost (Prov. xviii. 21) says: 'Death and life are in the power of the tongue;' and (Eccles. xxviii. 22), 'Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have perished by their own tongue.' And St. James (iii. 5) says: 'The tongue indeed is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how small a fire what a great wood it kindleth; and the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.' The non-mortification of the tongue makes the religion of man vain; as St. James (i. 26)

says : 'If any man think himself religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain.' The same want of mortification makes man's life uncomfortable, and brings upon him a premature death ; as St. Peter says (1 Peter iii. 10) : 'He that loves life and to see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.' And the Holy Ghost (Prov. x. 19) says : 'In the multitude of words there shall not want sin ; but he that refraineth his lips is most wise.' Therefore, to avoid the many evils caused by an unmortified tongue, let everyone be cautious to set a guard before his mouth, and a seal upon his lips, according to the admonition of the Holy Ghost (Eccles. xxii. 33) : 'Who will set a guard before my mouth, and a sure seal upon my lips, that I fall not by them, and that my tongue destroy me not ?'

Moreover, the Blessed Virgin used the greatest modesty in dealing with others. St. Jerome (Ep. xxii. ad Eustoch. de Cust. Virginit. cap. xvi.) proposes to the virgin Eustochium the modesty of Mary, saying : 'Do you take example from the Blessed Mary, who was so pure that she deserved to be appointed Mother of God ; for when the angel Gabriel appeared in human form to her, and said, "Hail, full of grace ! the Lord is with thee," she was so confused and faint that she could not answer him, because she was never before saluted by any man. But afterwards, knowing who was the messenger, she spoke with him, so that while she was afraid of a man, she spoke without any fear with the angel.' It is worthy of remark that the angel found Mary alone shut up in her room. From the Gospel of St. John (i. 56) we learn that the Blessed Virgin, when visiting Elizabeth, remained with her three months, though by the Gospel it is not clear if she remained there to the time of her cousin's confinement, or returned home before that event. The reason assigned by those who maintain her going home before that time, was her modesty and love of retreat and solitude, because she well knew that on the occasion of child-birth, a great number of persons would come—relations, friends, and neighbours—and therefore, not wishing to be present at such a meeting, she returned to her retreat at Nazareth. Hence St.



Ambrose (on St. Luke, cap. i.) says: 'Let virgins learn not to go about, nor to stop in the streets, and talk publicly. While Mary remained at her cousin's, she was constantly in the house.' The same holy father (lib. ii. de Virg. c. ii.) says: 'Every year (Mary) went to Jerusalem, on the day of the solemnity; but she went with Joseph, which proves that even in going to the Temple, she wanted to have with her the guardian of her purity.' Again, the same (Ep. ad Lætam.) says: 'Your daughters must imitate Mary, who being found alone in her room by the angel, was much troubled, that in spite of her custom she saw a man, that is, an angel in human form.' Now if our Blessed Lady, who was confirmed in grace, and could not be perverted by others, kept herself so far from the familiarity and company of others, how much more circumspect and cautious must a virgin be, as well as married women, to keep themselves out of danger! Even persons of a holy life have fallen into sin, for not having avoided the approximate occasions of sin. St. Jerome (Ep. ad Nepot.) admonishes Nepotianus to avoid the familiarity of women, and says: 'You must not put confidence in your own experience of chastity, for you cannot assert yourself to be more saintly than David, nor stronger than Samson, nor wiser than Solomon.'

Moreover, Mary used the most rigorous circumspection about herself, and regulated perfectly all her movements, her appearance, her walking, and all her actions, so that the whole exterior demeanour of her body indicated the perfect regularity of the interior affections of her soul. Her singular personal beauty presented to the view of the public an appearance over which was diffused such a spirit of chastity and sweetest purity, that all carnal concupiscences vanished, as has been related by St. Thomas (3 Dist. ii. p. 2). Finally, her exterior modesty was greatly edifying; so that, as it is found in antiquity, she was regarded, as it were, as a being superior to the human race. How beautiful and precious is the virtue of modesty! Those who are modest are acknowledged by Mary to be her true children. The modesty of the eyes preserves the purity of the heart: Mary was thus pure in heart, on account of the modesty of her eyes. A

Christian wishing to keep his heart pure, must mortify his eyes by avoiding to fix them on objects that may deprave the heart. Jeremias, weeping, exclaims (Lament. iii. 51): 'My eye hath wasted my soul.' King David falls miserably into grievous sins, in consequence of casting his eyes immodestly upon Bethsabee. The wife of Putiphar conceives impure desires by looking immodestly upon Joseph. While the modesty of the eyes discovers purity of heart, the immodesty of the eyes shows the depravity of it, as we learn by the Holy Ghost (Eccles. xxvi. 12), saying: 'The fornication of a woman shall be known by the haughtiness of her eyes, and by her eyelids.' St. Augustine (Ep. cix.) tells women: 'Your eyes must not be fixed on all persons. You cannot claim to have a chaste heart if your eyes are unchaste, for unchaste eyes are the mark of an unchaste heart.'

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### SECTION III.

#### ON THE VOLUNTARY POVERTY AND DETACHMENT OF MARY FROM WORLDLY GREATNESS.

ANOTHER fountain of human concupiscence, as it was stated before, is the appetite for human greatness and the comforts of life. To this Mary opposed a voluntary poverty, a full detachment from all worldly possessions, and renunciation of the comforts of life. Voluntary poverty, while it detaches man from worldly things, from a life of ease and from other objects which may argue softness, delicacy, solicitude for temporal advantages, raises the soul from this earth to the contemplation of celestial things, and unites it to the fount of true riches and greatness. Mary, not rich in family goods, lived according to the spirit of poverty, detached from all worldly things, and in actual privation of them; content only to be rich in spiritual blessings, and in the possession of the sanctifying grace of God. With reference to the poverty of Mary at the time of the Nativity of Jesus Christ, St. Cyprian (Serm. de Nativ.) says: 'She had no ambition for a house, but for a stable: the mother on the hay, the Son in a manger.'

Such a dwelling-place was elected by the Maker of the universe, and such were the comforts of the time of the lying-in of the sacred Virgin. The swaddling clothes are the purple, a patched dress forms the royal garment, the mother is the midwife and the protection of the beloved Infant. The circumstances of the family do not permit them to have servants; and the poor table excludes the service of slaves.' Mary showed also her state of poverty, by offering in the Temple, after forty days from her delivery, only two doves, the least offering that could be made by the poor. If she had had the means to buy a lamb, being so observant of the duties of religion, and so perfect in complying with the law, she would certainly have done so. After the death of her Divine Son, she continued to live poor till her death, working with her hands, and receiving relief from the funds of the Church, administered by the apostles and deacons. Mary was poor from her state of life as well as by election. It is not indeed the privation of temporal things which constitutes the virtue of poverty, but the detachment of heart from earthly possessions, and the love of poverty, which makes poverty a virtue. One may be poor without having the virtue of poverty; as is the case with him who unwillingly and in spite of his desire finds himself in poverty; or with another, who voluntarily chooses to be poor through pride, in order to be praised or esteemed by others, as some pagan philosophers did. Therefore he only possesses the virtue of poverty who not so much through the necessity of his condition as by the election of his will, not by pride, but only from love and in imitation of Jesus Christ, chooses and loves the state of poverty, as was the case with Mary, who willingly preferred a state of poverty, as conformable with the divine ordinance, which required that Jesus Christ should be the poor Son of a poor Mother. Indeed our Blessed Saviour came into this world to combat worldly pomps and riches, to persuade men to the contempt of the world, and to raise poverty in the opinion of men, and ennoble it by His example; so Mary, who was to contribute with Him to the restoration of human nature, chose to give in herself the example of a voluntary, spontaneous, and

perpetual poverty. The example indeed of the voluntary poverty of Jesus Christ and of Mary had in Christendom the most beautiful imitations, particularly among those who consecrated themselves to God in the religious state. By the vow of poverty a religious person detaches her heart from human things, in order to attach herself entirely to God and the celestial possessions. By such a vow she actually dispossesses herself of all temporal things, so that she is no more able to say of anything, 'This is mine;' and besides, *deprives herself of the liberty of possessing anything for the future*, which makes her free also from the temptation of thinking again of worldly things, and thus establishes her perpetual happiness. Hence it is a great merit to follow the virtue of poverty either in the religious state, or in the midst of society, under obedience to one's spiritual father.

On the other hand, there is a great danger for the worldlings who seek only money, and that sometimes by means neither honest nor lawful. St. Paul (1 Tim. vi. 9) says: 'They that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which draw men into destruction and perdition, for the desire of money is the root of all evils, which some coveting, have erred from the faith, and entangled themselves with many sorrows.' The salvation of a rich man, whose thoughts and heart are entirely fixed on making money, and who is not at all liberal to the poor, may be said to be at stake. The Holy Ghost, through the royal prophet (Ps. lxi. 11) says: 'Trust not in iniquity [secret frauds], and covet not robberies [open wrongs]. If riches abound, set not your heart upon them.' Avarice being the root of all evil, God forbids not only secret frauds and open wrongs towards our neighbours, but He goes further, in prohibiting even an affection for riches. So that we ought to have our heart detached also from the love of riches. 'When riches abound, they must flow to our advantage,' as St. Augustine remarks, 'without allowing ourselves to be overwhelmed by them and to be lost.' It is a precept of Jesus Christ to give alms to the poor, or for charitable purposes (Matt. xi. 41): 'That which remaineth, give in alms.' Upon which text St. Thomas

(ii. 2, q. 32, art. 5) says : 'To give alms from the superfluity—what is not required for life—is a precept.' Therefore, compliance with the precept of giving alms is an ingredient necessary for man's salvation.

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#### SECTION IV.

##### ON THE HUMILITY OF MARY.

THE third fount of concupiscence with which the world is infected is the appetite for honours and worldly glory ; and to this the Blessed Virgin opposed a contempt for preeminence, and the exercise of Christian humility. This virtue induces our will to a sincere abasement of ourselves before God and men, grounded upon a lively and profound knowledge, expressed also exteriorly, of our nothingness, misery and sinfulness. According to St. Thomas (ii. 2, q. 161, art. 6), the essence of humility consists in repressing the natural appetite of man to elevate himself, in subjecting himself to God and men, and in expressing, both in words, acts, and gestures, the interior persuasion of his own nothingness and unworthiness. The constant purpose of the Blessed Virgin was to keep herself retired, to abstain from wishing to appear great before men, and to live subject to God and men by exhibiting even exteriorly her humility, and manifesting it in her words and acts. The angel tells her that she was full of grace, and that God was with her : that she was blessed among women. And Mary, considering herself undeserving and unworthy of such praise, 'was troubled at his saying ;' and, in the deepest sentiment of her nothingness, answers : 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord.' Hence St. Ambrose (in Luc. c. i.) says : 'Behold the humility and devotion of Mary. She declares herself to be the handmaid of God, while she is elected to be His Mother. She is not exalted at the unexpected election ; but, by declaring she was His handmaid, she virtually declared that she had no title to such a dignity.' St. Augustine likewise (Serm. li.) says : 'We must not leave unnoticed, particularly for the

instruction of women, the great modesty of Mary. It was an angel that came to her, saying, "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call Him Jesus; and He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High." She had deserved to bring forth the Son of the Most High, and, nevertheless, she regarded herself as the most humble of creatures. She did not prefer herself before her husband, nor any of her name. Thus, again, when she found her Divine Son in the Temple, she said "*Thy father and I*," and not I and Thy father, "have been in search of Thee." In this manner she not only shows the dignity of her womb, but respects also the conjugal order.' Elizabeth in like manner calls Mary the Mother of God, and blessed among women; and Mary, in return, says that it was only God that was to be praised, because He had benignly regarded the humility of His handmaid; so that, whatever goodness and worthiness might be found in her, was not her own merit, but only the effect of the bounty and omnipotence of God: 'He who is mighty hath done great things to me.' As pride and self-love is the root of all vices, and the fruitful parents of all evil, so humility is the foundation of all virtues as well as the safeguard of sanctity. The more humble a soul is, the greater is its sanctity. As most deep and broad were the foundations of humility in Mary, so did they give most room to bear the marvellous structures of sanctity that rose upon her. Hence St. James of Sarug (Carm. i. p. 213) says: 'God looked at her and took His abode in her, because she was the most humble of mortals.'

Mary's exterior behaviour showed at all times that she was fully persuaded of what she said—'Behold the handmaid of God.' As such she is found in all periods of her life. Humble at home towards her parents, humble in the Temple towards the ministers of the sanctuary and the superioress of the virgins; humble with Joseph, humble with Jesus, humble with her cousin Elizabeth, humble with her subjects, humble with good people as well as bad, humble with all and in all circumstances, humble in time of peace as well as in time of trials and persecutions—in a word, she was always humble. It was through humility that she concealed

her exalted state, especially on the occasion when Joseph, not knowing the mystery of the Incarnation, was so much perplexed and agitated. Through love of the same virtue, she avoided all meetings which could procure for her esteem and praise on the part of men. So we never read in the Gospel that she appeared with Jesus Christ in the time when He was applauded by all and brought in triumph; but only do we find her remaining with Him in the time of His private life and of His most humiliating death. Likewise, we never find her to have spoken of her nobility, of the kings and high priests her ancestors, or of her noble education, and her scientific, natural or supernatural endowments. We never find in her any word of praise, but only of humiliation; she was quite sensible of her nothingness; nor was she ashamed to appear before others as poor and worthy of contempt. She wanted to be considered like other women, though so much privileged above all. When by the inhabitants of Bethlehem an asylum was refused her, she could have made known to them her high position as Mother of the Messiah. Such a distinction would have been sufficient to have gained for her respectful invitations to an honourable domicile. But her humility alone prevented her doing so. Again, she had no obligation, as was mentioned before, to subject herself to the humiliating rite of the purification; nevertheless, through her humility, concealing her rare privilege of being a virgin-mother, she went as any other woman to subject herself to the humiliating rite of the purification. How beautiful is the humility of Mary! How worthy of imitation! How necessary to be imitated! It is therefore indeed a subject of serious meditation, that no one without humility can enter into the kingdom of heaven. Indeed there is no going to heaven without God's grace. Now, 'God resists the proud, and gives His grace to the humble.' (Jac. iv. 6.) And Jesus Christ says: 'Except you become as little children (by humility), you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' (Matt. xviii. 3.) There is no room in heaven for pride. Lucifer and his followers were cast out of heaven and confined for ever in hell through pride. How horrible and frightful is pride!

## SECTION V.

## ON THE MEEKNESS AND SWEETNESS OF THE HEART OF MARY.

HUMILITY is not a barren virtue, but the mother of other virtues; in other words, it is the foundation of all virtues. Two beautiful daughters of humility are meekness and sweetness, and these were two sisters of the humility of Mary. Jesus Christ being the first type and model of humility, divinely said of Himself (Matt. xi. 29): 'Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.' Mary being the first-born of all pure creatures in all virtues, was the first also in the imitation of the meekness and sweetness of Jesus Christ; and so she could repeat in all truth: 'Learn of me, that I am meek and sweet of heart.' *Meekness* restrains anger, and bears with equanimity all affronts and provocations; and *sweetness* makes the meek person to meet adversities with a joyful heart in God, blessing the will of God in all things. Such was Mary; she was like a graceful little lamb, never angry, never tiresome or troublesome, never disagreeable, never like the wolf nor the lion, never cross, never quarrelsome, never saying a bad word, never scolding or abusing others. On the contrary, she was always gentle, ever mild, ever courteous, ever affable, sweet in all her ways, loving all without distinction, and suffering silently and modestly all injuries without opening her mouth. Mary was that faithful virgin following the Lamb wheresoever He goeth (Apoc. xiv. 4) with a calm serenity and tranquillity of soul. She appeared to be identified with meekness and sweetness itself. Besides, the interior peace of her soul, as well as the exterior forms of a courteous, charitable behaviour, had the effect of alluring others to follow Christ. There is indeed, after the grace of God, no better means of keeping back a Catholic sinner from his wrong way, or of restoring a dissenter from Catholic unity to his abandoned mother Church, than a charitable, meek, and sweet heart. In conclusion, the true spirit of the Catholic religion is charity, mercy, meek-



ness, forgiveness of all injuries, and a pure and disinterested love for the spiritual as well as corporal welfare of our neighbour. Our Saviour (Matt. v. 4) says: 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.' Upon this text, St. Leo (Serm. in Fest. Omnium Sanct.) says: 'The land promised to the meek is the flesh of the saints, which, on account of their humility, shall be changed by a happy resurrection, and clothed with the glory of immortality.' Such a promise is very gratifying, as that body which, on account of the virtue of meekness, is at present humbled, despised and ill-treated; will at the universal resurrection of the bodies appear united with the soul, all glorious and immortal. And the same holy father adds, that in this way the meek of heart for his virtue shall be rewarded, so that humiliation shall be the way to his exaltation: 'Ut periculum vertatur in præmium, et quod fuit oneri, sit honori.' The same is stated by St. Hilarius and St. Ambrose. But if so honourable and happy shall be the resurrection of the meek and humble man, how different shall be that of the proud sinner! We learn by the Book of Wisdom (v. 1-9) the frightful scene which shall be witnessed in the Valley of Josaphat: 'Then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them, and taken away their labour. These seeing it, shall be troubled with terrible fear; and shall be amazed at the suddenness of their unexpected salvation, saying within themselves, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit: These are they whom we had some time in derision, and for a parable of reproach; we fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us. We carried ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known. What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow.' Mary will be present at the last judgment; but as the mercy of God shall be in-

flexible on that day of full justice, so on that day sinners shall have no hope in the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. However, we may at present through Mary's intercession obtain the grace of leading such a good life by imitating her virtues, as to be acknowledged on that day for her children, and looked upon with loving eyes and maternal smiles.

Now if the dissenter from Catholic faith wishes not on that tremendous day to be of the number of those that shall say, 'We have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us,' he must lose no time in going back to the true Church, which was forsaken by his ancestors. Likewise, if the Catholic sinner wishes to avoid the utterance of those awful words: 'We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour: behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints,' he ought to make haste to return to the bosom of Jesus Christ by a true repentance. Fortunately, both for the Protestant and Catholic sinner, Mary is still the refuge of sinners, and the Virgin powerful and merciful. No Christian, therefore, who after God puts his confidence in her intercession, will be disappointed, nay, at the point of his death will undoubtedly rejoice for having had recourse now to her motherly patronage.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS.

THROUGH the evidence adduced throughout the present work, we presume we have put before our readers in as clear a light as possible, supported by all the principles of logical and theological reasoning, that Mary was made by the Holy Trinity an object of veneration, confidence, and imitation for all Christians, so that all generations should call her blessed, as indeed, wherever the sun shone, Christ being confessed and worshipped, there His Mother also is proclaimed as the blessed. Our demonstrations were grounded, first, upon the two pillars of our faith admitted by Protestants: 'Scripture and primeval antiquity,' so that each proposition or thesis has been proved by Holy Writ, and the tradition of the early fathers. We made use of the fathers as relators of facts, as historical evidences in matters of fact, as witnesses both of the biblical and traditional doctrine. Besides, we brought the testimonies only of the fathers of the first five centuries of Christianity, whose authority cannot be disputed and objected to, even by those who do not share in the blessings of our faith. They are men of common sense and honest heart, worthy to be credited by all. There are among them St. Ignatius Martyr, who was a disciple of the apostles; St. Irenæus, also martyr, and disciple to the great Polycarp, who had been the disciple of the apostle St. John; St. Justinus, who was likewise a martyr, and so learned, that there was no opinion of the philosophers that was not known to him; St. Cyprian, whose conversion was considered by pagans a mortal blow to their errors, so great was the opinion they had of his wisdom and merit; St. Jerome, who had so sublime a wit, and was the most learned of his time; St. Basil, who was the light of the Greek Church; St. John Chrysostom, the most eloquent man that could be found; St. Ambrose, who, though young, was judged by the emperors to be fit to

preside over provinces, and, on account of his learning, was called by St. Basil a sublime man, and by St. Augustine a bishop known throughout the world for his rare qualifications; St. Augustine, who was of a genius the most vast, and of a spirit the most profound and penetrating. Likewise, SS. Ephrem, Gregory Nazianzen, Cyril of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, James of Sarug, and others brought forward by us, were all worthy of credit, and respected for their authority. Besides, as the general or œcumenical councils constitute the dogmatical language of the Church, and the expression of faith, and keep it alive in all hearts, and are also the monuments of the faith and belief of different ages of the Church, so, to confirm our statements, we made use of the definitions of such general synods as took place during the first five centuries of the Church. Moreover, as the form of prayer shows that of belief, so that from the forms of prayer used by the Church is understood what she believes, so we endeavoured to prove our thesis also by the various formulas of prayer used in the Universal Church during that period. Likewise the same belief of the Church being known from the different liturgies of the Church itself, we made use, for our purpose, of the ancient liturgical monuments, both of the Eastern and Western Church. Besides, as sculptures, paintings, and sepulchral inscriptions of the catacombs speak the true and candid language of the faith and piety of the Christians of the first centuries of Christianity, as taken from the doctrine and practice of the Church of their time, so all our propositions have been confirmed by monuments taken from Christian Archæology. Moreover, to ascertain the true sense of the Holy Scripture, and the fidelity of the Catholic Vulgate version, besides the primeval tradition of the Church, we have brought forward occasionally the evidence of the old versions of the Bible in different languages upon the subject under discussion, as well as the explanations of the best commentators on the Bible, both Catholic and Protestant. Finally, as one of the best arguments to urge against adversaries is that taken from their own mouth, we used to confirm all our propositions by the evidence of Protestant

divines or writers, being persuaded that no honest and consistent Protestant can deny a truth built upon foundations laid down by his doctors or writers themselves. If, then, from all the above authorities, acknowledged by all Christians to be proper and fit to establish a truth, it appears that our Blessed Lady, for the titles expressed throughout this work, is worthy of veneration, trust, and imitation, shall not all Christians be bound to venerate Mary, and confide in her, and imitate her virtues? Could, indeed, a Christian of conscience, or even of common judgment and reasoning, deny such a tribute towards the Mother of God, so saintly in herself, so loving of us, and ready ever to seek from her omnipotent and merciful Son spiritual graces for our salvation and sanctification? Oh think of it, dear reader, and you will certainly not repent of having become a client and lover of such a tender, noble, wise, and powerful Mother!

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